LAVENDER®

Since 1995

SPONSORED BY

See mental health

ANDI OTTO

INSIDE: TWIN CITIES PRIDE FESTIVAL MAP AND VENDOR LISTINGS

2023 LAVENDER MAGAZINE COMMUNITY AWARDS

732 JUNE 15-28, 2023
MINNESOTA'S LGBTQ MAGAZINE
LAVENDERMAGAZINE.COM
READ US ONLINE ON ISSUU
FACEBOOK / LAVENDERMAGAZINE
INSTAGRAM / @LAVENDERMAGAZINE

IT TAKES A QUEER VILLAGE

PFund FOUNDATION

to support the largest-ever cohort of PFund Scholars. We awarded more than $132,000 to 54 LGBTQ+ students in the Upper Midwest this year, thanks to our community of staff, board members, volunteers, alumni, and donors.

SCAN TO DONATE

Learn more at PFundFoundation.org

SUBARU

The 2024 Subaru Crosstrek. Whatever adventures you have in mind, you can get there with the confidence of standard Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive. There's also a 2.5-liter direct-injection SUBARU BOXER engine available to give the 2024 Crosstrek up to 182 horsepower. With the Crosstrek, your journey goes on and on – 97% of Subaru Crosstrek vehicles sold in the last 10 years are still on the road today, more than Honda CR-V, Toyota RAV4, or Jeep Compass.*

*Based on Experian Automotive vehicles in operation vs. total new registrations for MY2011-2021 as of December 2021.

Luther | Bloomington Subaru

Visit us at our new location!

500 American Boulevard West, Bloomington

www.bloomingtonsubaru.com | 763-392-9959

CONTENTS

LAVENDER

ISSUE 732 June 15-28, 2023

2023 Lavender Magazine Community Awards

22 Lavender's 2023 Community Pride Awards

40 Twin Cities Pride Festival Map and Vendor Listings

46 Twin Cities Pride's Executive Director - Andi Otto

47 Serving on the Frontlines: Insights on Federal Deployments and the Evolution of the Minnesota National Guard

48 The Mother Of Pride, Marsha P. Johnson

50 Pioneering Leadership: An Exclusive Interview with Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson

18: Photo by Krista Koleske, 12: Photo by Joel Swenson, 60: Photo by Randy Stern

OUR LAVENDER

8 From the Editor
9 A Word in Edgewise
10 Lavender Lens
12 Biz Buzz: Seward Community Co-op

OUR SCENE

14 A Matter Of Taste: An Interview With Alison Riley
16 Eat The Menu: Herbst Eatery & Farm Stand
18 New Artist Showcase: Abigail Fierce
20 A New Face At DC Comics
52 Big Time Goodtime - The Gay Softball World Series Proves That The Best Way To Get Is To Give

OUR LIVES

54 Finding Peace Through the Noise, How Hennepin County Helps LGBTQ+ Community With Mental Health
56 Senior Living: Jones-Harrison's Rainbow Connection Creates a Safe Haven for LGBTQ+ Elders

OUR RESOURCES

58 Community Connection
59 The Network

OUR HOMES

60 Our Rides

46

ON THE COVER

Andi Otto. Photo by Brooke Ross

LAVENDERMAGAZINE.COM

Exclusive online content available on our website. Visit ISSUU.COM or download our app to read our Digital Edition.

"Bob's Choice"

An LGBTQ+ Activist's Death With Dignity Journey

Join Compassion & Choices for a free community screening of independent documentary "Bob's Choice," followed by a panel discussion on end-of-life options and advocacy in Minnesota.

June 28 @ 5:30 p.m.
Ramsey County Library
2180 Hamline Ave. N.
Roseville, MN

June 29th @ 2pm
Hosmer Library
347 E. 36th St.
Minneapolis, MN

Hosted by

compassion & choices | ACTION NETWORK

Thanks to our media sponsor

LAVENDER

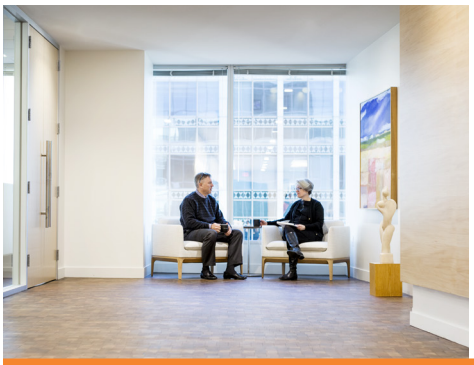
AS YOUR DREAMS EVOLVE, WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU.

Whether you're buying your first car or your retirement home, American Family Insurance is with you every step of the way, ensuring that your dreams are always protected.

Lindsey Manhart, Agent
Manhart Insurance Group, INC.
Bus: (763) 614-5040
lmanhart@amfam.com
lindseymanhart.com

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE®

American Family Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. & its Operating Companies,
American Family Insurance Company,
6000 American Parkway, Madison, WI 53783
008747 – Rev. 12/15 ©2015 – 14162349



Locally sourced advocacy and advice from lawyers you know.

Custody & Parenting Time • Child Support
Dissolution • Spousal Maintenance
Complex Valuation • Domestic Partnership
Adoption • Third Party Custody • Appeals

612.339.7121 BEST & FLANAGAN www.bestlaw.com

NORTHLAND VISIONS
NATIVE AMERICAN ART & GIFTS

NORTHLAND VISIONS

MINNESOTA'S Best 2021 SILVER WINNER

NATIVE ARTWORK • JEWELRY • BLANKETS • WILD RICE & GIFTS
www.northlandvisions.com

861 East Hennepin Ave, Mpls, MN • 612-872-0390 • Tues-F 10-5:30PM Sat 10-5PM

LAVENDER®

Volume 29, Issue 732 · June 15-28, 2023

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor Randy Stern 612-461-8723
Editorial Assistant Linda Raines 612-436-4660
Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner
Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer
Contributors Linden M. Bayliss, Lakey Bridge, Buer Carlie, Terrance Griep, Elise Maren, Jen Peebles-Hampton, Karri Plowman, Analise Pruni, Linda Raines, Gabrielle Reeder, Gregg Shapiro, Aurora Smith, Jamez L. Smith, Susan Swavely, Carla Waldemar, Todd P. Walker

ADVERTISING

Vice President of Sales & Advertising
Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690
Account Executives
Nathan Johnson 612-436-4695
Richard Kranz 612-436-4675
Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer
Sales & Event Administration
Linda Raines 612-436-4660
National Sales Representatives
Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

CREATIVE

Creative/Digital Director Mike Hnida 612-436-4679
Photographer Sophia Hantzes

ADMINISTRATION

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.
President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665
Chief Financial Officer Tracey Mittelstadt 612-436-4664
Administrative Assistant Honora Valentine 612-436-4660
Distribution Metro Periodical Partners 612-281-3249
Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford
Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013), Tim Campbell (1939-2015), John Townsend (1959-2019)

Letters are subject to editing for grammar, punctuation, space, and libel. They should be no more than 300 words. Letters must include name, address, and phone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Priority will be given to letters that refer to material previously published in Lavender Magazine. Submit letters to Lavender Magazine, Letters to the Editor, 5100 Eden Ave, Suite 107, Edina, MN 55436 or e-mail editor@lavendermagazine.com.

For our Privacy Policy, go to LavenderMagazine.com/resources/privacy-policy

LAVENDER MEDIA, INC.

5100 Eden Ave, Suite 107, Edina, MN 55436
612-436-4660 **Office**
612-436-4660 **Subscriptions/Distribution**
612-436-4660 **Lavender Advertising**

LAVENDER MAGAZINE.COM
BIG GAY NEWS .COM
Verified Vendor

mmpa Lavender 2016 Magazine of the Year

Printer of Lavender
Schumann Printers, Inc.
920-484-3348

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

Entire contents copyright 2023. All rights reserved. Publication of the name or photograph of any person, organization, or business in this magazine does not reflect upon one's sexual orientation whatsoever. Lavender® Magazine reserves the right to refuse any advertising. This issue of Lavender® Magazine is available free of charge during the time period published on the cover. Pickup at one of our distribution sites is limited to one copy per person.

A LOCAL BANK THAT KNOWS YOUR COMMUNITY?

YOU'VE GOT IT.

Associated Bank
PRIDE & EQUALITY
Colleague Resource Group

BEST PLACES TO WORK for LGBTQ+ Equality 2022
100% CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX

At Associated Bank, we foster an LGBTQ+ friendly workforce and workplace, as well as products that work toward everyone's financial potential.

Associated Bank knows the Midwest. You know your money goals. Together, we've got this.

AssociatedBank.com

Associated Bank

Your money works here.®

Equal Opportunity Employer. M/F/D/V. Drug-Free Workplace. Member FDIC. (5/23) P08847

And, The Lavender Magazine Community Pride Award Goes To...

BY RANDY STERN

It's mid-June already! Therefore, it's time for the Lavender Magazine Community Pride Awards issue!

Just like every year, we try our best to present these awards to a worthy group of people, organizations, and businesses that serve our community well in their own capacity. We look at the past, present, and future of our community when we select these worthy recipients.

From key figures in healthcare to driving forces supporting our community, we have a superb group of people to celebrate this year Some of which you will meet for the first time.

On behalf of everyone at *Lavender Magazine*, we congratulate all of the winners!

You can, as well. At our First Thursday event on July 6 at the Rock Elm Tavern in Plymouth. Just like every First Thursday we host, it starts at 5:30 PM.

Also, we're a weekend away from Twin Cities Pride. We have a couple of items that we have on here, including an interview with the new Executive Director, Andi Otto. He is also gracing our cover in this issue. You might not want to miss this year's expanded Pride festival, now scaling over Hennepin Avenue into the Sculpture Garden. Not to mention, Otto is driving new initiatives to bridge our community beyond just the Twin Cities.

Also, we have more for this month in this second issue of June. Think of this as a "volume 2" of our last issue – the big Pride issue. There's always more stories to tell as a run-up to Twin Cities Pride weekend.

Don't forget to use this as a guide to get in and around Twin Cities Pride! Look for the map and listing of vendors and other information inside this issue to plan out your weekend at Loring Park, the Sculpture Garden, and on Hennepin Avenue.

I often ask why we include as many stories as we do during our June issues. It is all because of us – a diverse community that is seen, celebrated, and honored.

That's why June is our month.

Keep in mind that our lives do not stop celebrating at the end of Twin Cities Pride weekend. Just a gentle reminder that there are more Pride celebrations across Minnesota and beyond out state line scheduled all the way into October. Not to mention that the Gay Softball World Series is coming to the Twin Cities at the end of August and the Lynx is hooping it up in their 25th season!

Celebrate, dear readers! Bring your flags, your pets, and your families! After all, the party is far from over! ▮

Orient Express Boarding Now at the Guthrie

BY E.B. BOATNER

When the Agatha Christie Estate offered playwright Ken Ludwig carte blanche to adapt a novel for the stage, he chose 1934's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Christie herself was a dab hand at theater, penning *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Ten Little Indians*, and, of course, *The Mousetrap* which opened in 1947 and played–with a hiatus for Covid19– until, well…tonight.

But nor is Ludwig a novice, having written some 32 plays and musicals, doting on mystery *and* comedy, including his *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery*, and *The Game's Afoot* or, *Holmes for the Holidays*.

"I think the genres of comedy and mystery have a lot in common," Ludwig explained in a 2017 *New York Times* interview. "Both start with the puzzle assembled, and suddenly the pieces are taken apart and thrown into the air. And then they finally come down, and all is well."

Of course, from a full-fledged novel to a two-hour drama, there must be elisions and compressions; the novel's original twelve suspects have been winnowed to eight, a main premise upon which the plot rides has been presented in shadows and cries before the curtain rises, and more humor and wordplay injected overall, in part, Ludwig's usual choice, in part to keep the characters, unlike the train, steaming ahead, attempting to seduce Hercule Poirot from his suspicion that something's not quite right with this disparate crew 'happening' to be traveling together on the Istanbul train off season, in the dead of winter.

Why a haughty Russian Princess, a nondescript Swedish missionary, a Countess, a governess returning from Baghdad, an unpleasant American businessman and his secretary, a Colonel, and a frisky grandmother "from the beautiful garden state of Minnesota"? None of whom admit any knowledge or connection with the others.

Christie took as her sources the tragic abduction and murder of the Lindberg child, adroitly melded to events in 1929 when the Orient Express was trapped in a blizzard and her own trial by heavy flooding. Then, a matter of sorting the details, fleshing out the suspects, and calling in Poirot.

They're barely underway when heavy snows stop the train in its tracks, the unpleasant businessman is found dead–pierced by eight stab wounds. Poirot is not happy to discover a plethora of clues, including witnesses to a second uniformed porter, of whom no trace can be found.

Christie used humor, but she was a mystery writer first and foremost. Hercule Poirot, her sleuth of the little grey cells, embodied drama, brains and humor in one tidy package, and the thrifty Christie could summon aspects of his temper as easily as tweaking a kaleidoscope. However ridicule he might appear, Poirot, powered by those little grey cells, always finds the culprit.

Surrounding all is the glorious Oriental Express embodying plenty, from luxe to louche, while lighting legerdemain, sound, movement draw the viewer into a magical world where each actor inhabits his or her character, from Michele Barber's Olympian Russian Princess Dragomiroff, to tall, handsome Andrew May settling into Poirot's prickly skin, to Sally Wingert reveling as bawdy, raucous Minnesotan Mrs. Hubbard (to Bouc): "You remind me of one of my husbands." Bouc: "Which one?" Mrs.H: "The next one."

The evening's journey is a pure joy. Names are named; truths are revealed. Scattered pieces do fall back in place, leaving Poirot with a single loose thread, such as carpet makers leave on a fine piece, lest they offend the gods.

At the Guthrie through 2 July. All aboard! ∎

Gay 90's Presents: A Benefit for Tubman LGBTQ+ Youth Safe Spaces

Minneapolis · 03.09.23

PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Lynette Reini-Grandell Launch Party of Her Memoir "Wild Things: A Trans-Glam-Punk-Rock Love Story"

Minneapolis · 03.16.23

PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

BUY ONE, GET ONE

40% OFF

WINDOWS AND DOORS[1]

Minimum purchase of 4.

PLUS AN EXTRA

$50 OFF

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE[1]

PLUS $0 MONEY DOWN, **$0** MONTHLY PAYMENTS, **$0** INTEREST FOR 12 MONTHS[1]

Minimum purchase of 4. Interest accrues from purchase date but is waived if paid in full within 12 months.

Installation by our Certified Master Installers is always included.

Trust your windows to us!

Unsure who you can trust to replace your old windows? Renewal by Andersen is part of Andersen®, the most trusted window and door brand.[2] We can install energy-efficient windows that help keep you warm and cozy this winter. And we back our products and work with the Nation's Best Warranty.[†] Call today for special savings!

RENEWAL by ANDERSEN CERTIFIED MASTER INSTALLER

CUSTOM BUILT IN THE USA*

ENERGY STAR AWARD 2023 PARTNER OF THE YEAR Sustained Excellence

RENEWAL by ANDERSEN

FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

wonderfulreplacementwindows.com

Hurry, Offer Ends July 15!
Call for your FREE consultation.

651-505-2522

[1]**DETAILS OF OFFER:** Offer expires 7/15/2023. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Buy one (1) window or entry/patio door, get one (1) window or entry/patio door 40% off, and 12 months $0 money down, $0 monthly payments, 0% interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 6/15/2023 and 7/15/2023. 40% off windows and entry/patio doors are less than or equal to lowest cost window or entry/patio door in the order. Additional $50 off your purchase, minimum purchase of four (4) required, taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 7/15/2023. Subject to credit approval. Interest is billed during the promotional period, but all interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid before the expiration of the promotional period. Financing for GreenSky® consumer loan programs is provided by federally insured, federal and state chartered financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License MN:BC130983/WI:266951. Excludes MN insurance work per MSA 325E.66. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. [2]Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. [†]It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest for details. "ENERGY STAR" is a registered trademark of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2023 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13348

*Using U.S. and imported parts.

Seward Community Co-op

BY LINDA RAINES

Business: Seward Community Co-op
Your Name: Natalia Mendez (they/them)
Job Title: Marketing and Communications Manager

Give us a brief overview of your business and what services you provide the community: Seward Community Co-op has been serving Minneapolis for over 50 years. In that time it has grown into two community-owned cooperative grocery stores with cafes, delis, and more, and a production facility. Beyond bringing healthy, local, and sustainably-sourced food to the community, Seward Co-op uses their Ends as a tool to support society's need for greater racial equity. With 23,000 owners strong, Seward Co-op is leveraging cooperative economics to cultivate a healthier and more equitable society.

How many years have you been in business? Seward Co-op has been around for 51 years, and I'm beginning my third year with them.

What's something unique we should know about your business? You can shop for your weekly groceries at Seward Co-op, and we offer much more, too! We are a meeting place to gather over delicious food from our Deli or a cup of coffee from our café. We work with community to offer educational classes that showcase local foods and cultures. We work with local farmers to help sustain a vibrant local food system. We have a SEED program that allows folks to round-up at the register to donate to local non-profits. While you feed yourself at the co-op, you feed the community, too!

What's your favorite thing about your job? As someone who holds multiple identities, I love the diversity of our staff and shoppers. The outside of our building says "Everyone Welcome," and I feel like we're always working with community to find ways to continue making our stores a more welcoming and comfortable spaces.

What's the best thing about working with the LGBTQ community? We contain multitudes! We are creative, vibrant, and we continue to persevere. I'm so proud to be a member of the local queer community and to be at a workplace that creates safer spaces for us to thrive. I'm proud of the partnerships we have with local organizations that support our community like RECLAIM!, the Aliveness Project, the Queer Farmer Convergence, and more.

Does your business have anything new, fun or unique happening on the horizon? We will be remodeling our Franklin store! We will be open while we create a space that is full of much more natural light from additional windows, wider walkways, a new classroom on the first floor, and more. Please make sure to pop in and watch the progress happen! We'll be doing it in phases so we disrupt shoppers' experiences as little as possible.

Natalia Mendez. Photo by Bill Hoben

If you weren't doing your current job, what would you be doing? Probably freelance writing, working less, making more art, and spending more time outside in the garden and on my bicycles and motorcycles. ▮

STANDARD HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

Celebrating Pride

Here for you
when you need us!

Grace (She/They)
Customer Service Representative

FAMILY OWNED
EST 1930
93
YEARS
& OPERATED

612-778-4718
standardheating.com

A Matter Of Taste
An Interview With Alison Riley

BY GREGG SHAPIRO

Even the best cooks and bakers among us know that not every attempt at food preparation turns out to be the way it was intended. Part essay collection/part cookbook, writer and creative-director Alison Riley's *Recipe for Disaster: 40 Superstar Stories of Sustenance and Survival* (Chronicle Books, 2023) folds in humorous and heartfelt tales to satisfy almost every appetite. A culinary combination of first-hand experiences and interviews, *Recipe For Disaster* features contributions from Riley's musician wife Meshell Ndegeocello, as well as Samantha Irby, Bowen Yang, Simon Doonan, Michael W. Twitty, Sarah Silverman, Alice Waters, and Chelsea Peretti, to name a few. Riley recently made time to answer a few questions about the book.

Gregg Shapiro: Alison, what can you tell the readers about the genesis of *Recipe for Disaster: 40 Superstar Stories of Sustenance and Survival?*

Alison Riley: I was mulling over the phrase *Recipe for Disaster* for a while before I was approached about collaborating with Chronicle Books. I knew it was something; it's a good fit within my general sensibility around making the most, and the best, of the worst, but I wasn't sure what until then. Once I started talking with the editor there, the shape of the book came together pretty quickly, though I had no idea how diverse the responses would, or could, be. It really shaped itself once the contributors started contributing.

GS: What was involved in the process of soliciting contributors for *Recipe for Disaster?*

AR: Many, many, many emails and phone calls, a lot of rejection, some plain silence, significant ego-checking on my part, and so much patience and gratitude.

GS: Was everyone you solicited able to contribute an essay or interview?

AR: Absolutely not! I probably asked over 100 people, if not many more, and these 40 are those who agreed.

GS: *Recipe for Disaster* features many LGBTQ+ contributors – Meshell Ndegeocello, Bowen Yang, Samantha Irby, Michael W. Twitty, Jacqueline Woodson, Simon Doonan, Becca Blackwell, and Kyle Abraham. As a member of the community yourself, please say something about the importance of having those voices represented.

AR: Well, honestly, I didn't have to think very hard about it. I would personally not be interested in something with a multitude of voices that didn't include a myriad of perspectives. And all those people that you've named, as well as Gabrielle Hamilton and Fran Tirado, are all totally different from one another. I hadn't tallied the queers myself but now considering that list, it is nice to see that even among "the community" there is such a diversity of people there and they share a wide range of stories, from the AIDS crisis to family rejection to the universal tale of not being nice enough to your mother.

GS: I recently interviewed Samantha Irby about her new book *Quietly Hostile*, which also features essays about food. Her essay *Rejection Chicken* is a perfect way to open the book, with its combination of humor and food. What does it mean to you to have an essay by Samantha leading off your book?

AR: Thank you for asking that because it means so much to me, actually. I admire Sam's humor and style very much and her willingness to be part of the book was a personal victory and a huge compliment. Seeing the beauty, the humor, or the value in something sad and terrible, especially while it's happening, is something I treasure in a person whether I know them or not.

GS: Your wife Meshell's essay is heartbreaking, but the conclusion in which she writes about clarifying her priorities – "friendship, musical integrity, people and partners that made me better, clean food and decent coffee" — ends on a hopeful note. Please say something about her contribution to the book.

AR: Meshell is my hero in that very sense – she has consistently made the choice to follow her own musical voice and not to capitulate to industry expectation or to the narrowness of genre, and she is one of the most authentic musical thinkers I know. I was grateful for her sharing a glimpse of how difficult it has been to stay true to herself and describe how little respect the music industry had (and certainly still has in plenty of ways) for an out, queer, black, woman before there were very many in the public eye.

GS: There are a series of essays near the center of the book that take a serious turn, touching on 9/11, the bombing of Belgrade, and the pandemic. Please say something about the inclusion of those types of pieces.

AR: I didn't prescribe tone or topic for anyone I asked to contribute to the book (though I didn't want it to become dominated by Covid) and those responses were honest and immediate responses to my prompt. Disasters, like everything, span a continuum and I was glad to have stories along all points.

GS: Have you tried any or all the foods and recipes mentioned?

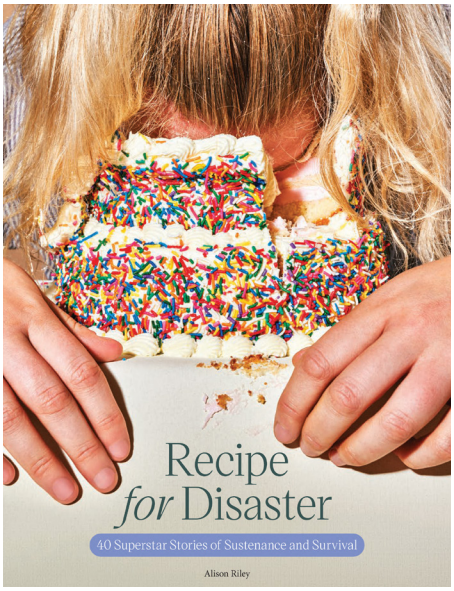
AR: I am far more fluent in low points than I am in food so, in all truthfulness, I don't cook much. That said, I have tried many, some just to be sure the recipes made sense. Having a recipe for Alice Waters' vinaigrette was worth doing the whole project.

GS: Could there be a *Recipe for Disaster 2* in the works?

AR: We'll see! I had a great time putting this book together, it was more fun and more work than I could have imagined and would love to do it again.

GS: Alison, I'd like to end with a quote from the Justin Vivian Bond essay: "If I feel like I need to cheer myself up, or if I want to show somebody I love them, I say, 'How about if I just fry us up some potatoes?'" Would you agree that food preparation is one of the ultimate expressions of love?

AR: Of course, it is! I don't show my own love that way, and no one wants me to because of my sorry culinary skills, but it certainly is a tried-and-true way to care for another person. One of my favorite parts of this book is how many of these recipes are about feeding oneself and the importance of caring for yourself when disaster strikes. We often forget to do that, and if this book does anything besides make people a little less afraid and a little more prepared to take care of themselves and each other, I'm satisfied. ▮



Photos courtesy of Deborah Pressman

HAPPY PRIDE!
We will be at the Twin Cities Pride Festival June 23-25

Pharaoh's Gyros
612-558-4255

PHARAOHS GYROS
MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

jewelry
home
chocolate

max's

SINGLE STONE

Shops at Excelsior & Grand | 3826 Grand Way | St. Louis Park | 952.922.8364
www.StyleByMax.com

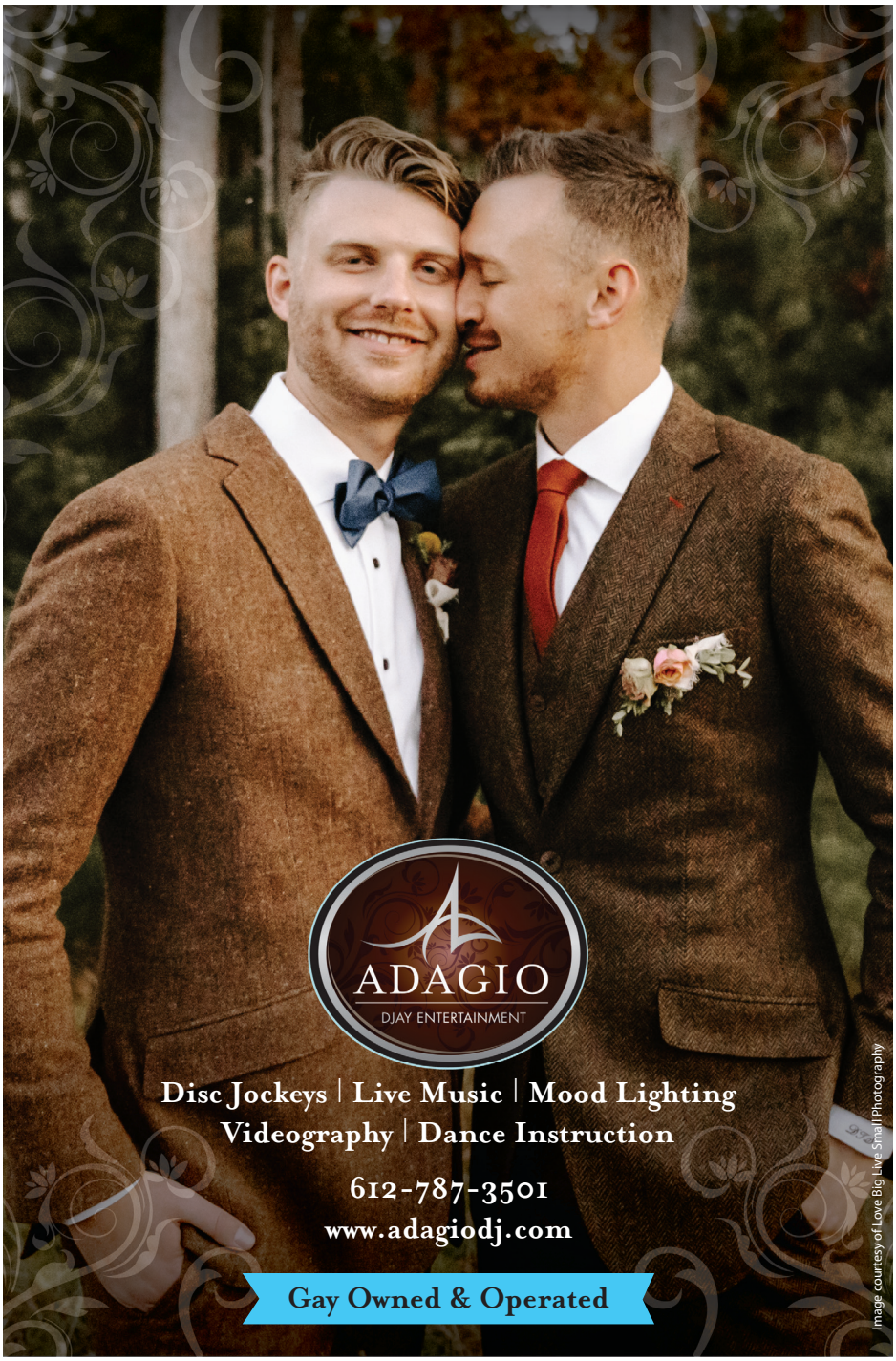
LA LA HOMEMADE ICE CREAM

Open Tuesday - Sun 12-8pm
Walk up service
Online ordering
lalahomemadeicecream.com
All day food menu
Experienced wedding dessert catering
meeting your vision for the special day

CLOUTIER LAW OFFICES P.A.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

FAMILY/DIVORCE/CUSTODY
DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS/DISSOLUTION
PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENTS
SPERM/EGG DONOR AGREEMENTS
SURROGACY
GAY MARRIAGE ADVICE
SECOND/STEP PARENT ADOPTION
INJURIES/AUTO ACCIDENTS
PROBATE
WILLS & TRUSTS
BUSINESS LAW

Convenient Downtown Skyway Connected Offices
612.332.5100
Free Initial Consultation
Suite 1600 Medical Arts Building, 825 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55402
OVER 25 YEARS OF LEGAL EXPERIENCE
WWW.CLOUTIER-LAW.COM



Farm-Fresh Harvest

BY CARLA WALDEMAR

Q: What happens when a couple of foodies wish they could walk to dinner? A: Herbst.

It's the shiny, new restaurant serving the newly-condo-ized St. Anthony Park neighborhood along St. Paul's Raymond Avenue, occupying a classic 1920s building, vacant for ages. Its new owners (it helps that one of them boasts connections to Tilia's successful kitchen) forged connections with a local farmers' collective to ensure fresh, fresh foodstuffs. (Bonus: A neighboring building, separated by an entrance arcade, now sells DIY edibles, plus the ceramic tableware used in the restaurant. (Thus, we checked in for our dinner reservation toting a bag of sweet potatoes.)

The site is a winner. Herbst, as the new dining spot is called (the name means 'harvest,' I'm told) boasts snow-white walls (hung here and there with local art) soaring to a lofty ceiling atop a window wall that floods June's lingering daylight onto the welcoming banquettes, two-tops and the curvy bar's platoon of stools. There's pleasant patio seating as well.

That bar boasts a vanguard program that lists cocktails by how they hit your palate—mineral, for example, or bitter (which included my potion of rye, amaro, sweet vermouth and red bitter, $15), funky (think

Lamb leg steak, blistered snap peas. Photos by Mike Hnida

Rhubarb, sesame, goat cheese ice cream

rum, aquavit), earthy (mezcal) and seasonal (currently, brandy). Within these categories are further refinements: Order your libation at full, low or zero proof. Or simply flee to the wine list ($11-20 BTG), which salutes small producers.

Spring's dinner menu is divided into four suggested courses. The first, introducing lighter bites ($8-17), lists temptations ranging from mushrooms and peas in goat's milk or smashed turnip in chili vinaigrette to our more traditional choice, chicken liver mousse. It's a puree of perfection for liver lovers: ultra-smooth and creamy in texture, mild yet intriguing in flavor—accented both by honey and pepper, then topped by a dusting of chopped pistachios and whetted by a side of sour cherry jam. Spread it on the accompanying rustic toasts and smile.

The menu's ensuing quartet ($14-18) ranges from blistered snap peas with citrus and pecorino cheese to coal-roasted sweet potato (hey, we brought our own, remember?) to our selection, grilled sepia (aka cuttlefish, with a bouncy bite and modest flavor, nicely accented by a deep, dark pool of burnt-eggplant puree (sounds questionable, tastes wonderful) along with tiny cauliflower bits, adding unnecessary sharpness, and a brighter note of spicy pickled chilis.

The third course celebrates a trio of pastas ($21-23), once again generously portioned for sharing. We summoned the big bowl of lumache (wide and chewy, inch-long tubes) sauced in a green pesto bearing a little stroke of heat; it's paired with a couple of meatballs born of delicious, full-flavored lamb sausage. Or choose a simple spaghetti parm or ricotta gnocchi.

On to the main event: a choice of walleye, pork or lamb ($29-34). OK, we'll have the pork, because it's listed as paired with marinated clams, along with charred onion. Sounds like the typical marriage found in a familiar Portuguese stew, but no: the meat arrived in fillets rather than the expected cubes but proved sweet and tender and delicious. And the onions were also supremely sweet and tasty. Yet we pondered, where are the clams? "Oh, it's simply the juice of clams," our server enlightened us. Misleading. And not worth $31. Next time: the walleye, served with piquillo-braised kale and anchovy, or the lamb with anchovy walnut pesto—a meat-and-sauce pairing it's hard to foresee as a new taste sensation unless you, like the kitchen, are besotted with anchovies.

The dessert line-up ($6-11) seems well worth saving room. We had our hearts set on the already-famous cornbread ice cream, but, apparently, so did dozens of diners before us, so it was sold out. Instead we chose the grapefruit and pink peppercorn upside-down cake, served with roasted anise ice cream. We loved-loved!—the perky citrus -pepper topping but the cake it crested proved dry. We asked to substitute the kitchen's honey-sesame ice cream, which offered a deeply nutty, slightly sweet accompaniment. Next time: the rhubarb-sesame crunch, served with goat cheese ice cream. Or that cornbread frozen treat if it's not gone!

Expect a 21 percent service charge, so there's no need to tip the fine service we enjoyed. ∎

Herbst Eatery & Farm Stand
779 Raymond Ave.
St. Paul
(651) 340-0254
www.Herbstsaintpaul.com

Abigail Fierce. Photo by Krista Koleske

New Artist Showcase
Abigail Fierce

BY LINDEN M. BAYLISS

You may have seen her on your living room screen in shows like Hulu's *Love, Victor* and NBC's *This Is Us*, but Abigail Killmeier goes by another name, too. Meet Abigail Fierce, an indie pop singer-songwriter pouring her heart out into anthems of LGBTQ+ love and identity.

"Writing is the light in my life," says Fierce. "I always loved music. I think the first time I remember being introduced to music was when I was four years old. I was in bed with the flu and the series premier of *Hannah Montana* came on Disney Channel and I was like, 'hey, that chick's cool.' It sounds silly but it just grew from there, any kind of music I could get my hands on, I tried it out."

Her music ranges from the heartfelt "I Just Wanna Feel Okay Again," to the tongue in cheek pop-punk-inspired new single "Daphne," a song about falling in love with that cute barista with the black beanie (the one you also made up a name for). She calls it "the charming love song that LGBTQ+ women and girls have been looking for their whole lives."

Fierce describes her music as somewhere between pop-rock, pop-punk, and indie pop; the artist strives to bring her love of '90s alt-rock and grunge into the modern pop space. Some of her favorite artists include Alanis Morissette, Courtney Love, Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, 5 Seconds of Summer, King Princess, Girl in Red, and Phoebe Bridgers.

This multi-instrumentalist plays all of her tracks minus the drums herself, working with both her sound engineer and session musicians like Victor Indrizzo (who has worked with musicians like Alanis Morissette) to fill in those grooves. Fun fact, Fierce actually started as a ukulele player before she learned the guitar, but you won't hear much of the uke on her tracks these days.

"The guitar started coming in when I was like 12 or 13, and I *really* loved the guitar," she says, "so much more than ukulele. But, it was a good stepping stone."

Her truest love, I found out, is songwriting.

"My songs are my whole world, my work is very personal. I started writing songs in middle school because I was kinda shy. It was really a way for me to control my narrative when I felt like I didn't have much control over the things that were happening around me," Fierce says. She explains how, while it was difficult to come out, it was so much easier for her to write about than talk about. "And that has proven to be true in all aspects of my life," she says, "writing about it is how I work through it."

Fierce grew up in Kentucky, and says it wasn't the easiest for her growing up there, surrounded by people who both didn't understand her as an LGBTQ+ woman and who also often viewed her as competition when it came to the performing arts. She has since moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting and music, a learning curve for her albeit a positive one.

"When I first moved to L.A., I lived in an apartment with no washing machine, no microwave, and lots of cockroaches," she laughs. "It's a tough business, you know, and there are gonna be times when you have to grow a thick skin and realize that other people's opinions of you do not define you." She says she is grateful that although she may have felt alone a lot during her youth, that time spent alone is what made her strong enough to know who she is and get through some of the tougher times as an artist living in L.A.

What gets her through the most? Her fans, of course.

"My favorite interactions are either when they send me fan art or when they tell me how the music has affected their lives in a positive way," Fierce explains.

"People have told me that my song 'Scream It to the Whole World' has helped them come out, or it helps cheer them up when they have a bad day. I received a message the other day from a woman whose fiancé recently passed away, and she told me that she clicked on my song 'I Just Wanna Feel Okay Again' by accident. She thinks it was sent to her by the universe because that's what she needed in the moment, and I thought that was a really touching message."

Fierce had her first live show back in March at Madame Siam, a cocktail lounge and performance venue in Los Angeles. Being that most of her music career has taken place during a certain pandemic, she hasn't had a ton of opportunities to play live, but hopes to do more and more in the near future.

"I'm really excited to do more of it. Because most of my songs tell a story, it's really fun to see people's faces as they react to hearing the lyrics, especially people that haven't heard the songs before. I can go on the journey with them of hearing it for the first time and that's really cool."

With no plans for an album quite yet, Fierce says she plans to continue writing songs, releasing singles, and connecting with people.

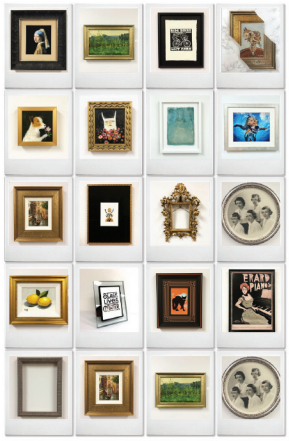
"The fact that something I wrote on my bedroom floor when I was sad could reach someone and help them feel less alone, that's the goal," she says. "That's what music did for me."

Check out her new won't-get-out-of-your-head single, "Daphne," available now on all streaming platforms!

Search "Abigail Fierce" on YouTube, Spotify, Amazon, and Apple Music. ▮

Abigail Fierce
Instagram: @akfierce
AbigailFierce.com

ELEMENT
WOOD FIRE PIZZA
96 BROADWAY ST. NE
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55413
(612) 379-3028
WWW.ELEMENTPIZZA.COM
Bring this ad in and receive 10% off your order.



FRAMEWORKS GALLERY
Custom Framing and Local Art
2022A Ford Parkway
St. Paul, MN 55116
651-698-3372
WWW.FRAMEWORKS-GALLERY.COM

FREE SUBSCRIPTION
YOU PAY ONLY FOR POSTAGE
LAVENDERMAGAZINE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

Park Tavern
EAT | DRINK | BOWL | PARTY
Possibly the Twin Cities' Most Awesome
PATIO
Live Music Every Tues, Weds, & Thurs!
www.ParkTavern.net
3401 Louisiana Ave, St. Louis Park

PRIDE OFFERINGS AT MODIST
PRIDE OR DIE

OUT NOW — LIGHT UP THE NORTH

Benefitting Gay Softball World Series learn more:

OUT NOW — RAINBOW RUSH THC SELTZER

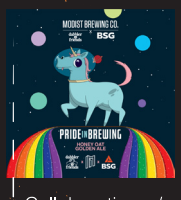
Collaboration w/ Granny's Edibles
Benefitting The Aliveness project

OUT NOW — DeLUSHious

Collaboration w/ LUSH Lounge benefitting Lush Legacy Fund

OUT NOW — HELLO, MY PRONOUNS ARE:

With a pronoun sticker built into the label.
Benefitting RECLAIM!

JUNE 24 — PRIDE IN BREWING BEER RELEASE

Collaboration w/ Dabble & Friends and BSG
Benefitting Dabbler & Friends

TRY ALL THE BEERS ON PRIDE DABBLER

PROUD SPONSOR OF
MNGFFL
TCGSL EST 1978
LIGHT UP THE NORTH GAY SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES 2023 TWIN CITIES
modistbrewing.com

A New Face At DC Comics

BY AURORA SMITH

The world of comic books has long been dominated by white faces, both on the page and behind the scenes. And even when minority characters appeared, they were often outliers or small side characters.

Milestone Media is changing that.

This company places Black and diverse superheroes (including LGBTQ+ characters) at the center of the action. They're actively working to carve out space for underrepresented characters and creators to flourish.

Creators like artist Kameron White. This young man recently participated in the Milestone Initiative Summit, hosted by Warner Bros. Discovery, DC Comics, and Ally. This Initiative was created to help amplify marginalized voices in comics, including support and mentorship to help new creators build their careers.

Kameron's Comic Book Journey

Kameron's been around comic books and art since he was a child.

"Growing up, I was into anime and animated series such as *Sailor Moon, Digimon, Justice League*, and *Static Shock*," says Kameron. "My dad collected a lot of comic books and shared his love for them with me as a child."

He'd copy what he saw from the comic books and manga. "I didn't really know what I was doing at first," says Kameron. Then he realized he was getting into a form of storytelling. "When I reached high school was when I knew this was what I wanted to continue to do."

Kameron grew up when a lot of the representation for minority characters was either nonexistent or stereotypical, painting the group in a negative light. He doesn't want to see that continued and feels it's extremely important for minority readers "to be able to see themselves and be celebrated in the world of comics. I make it a priority to make sure underrepresented groups are shown in [my] comics."

Which brought him to his experience participating in the Milestone Initiative.

The Milestone Initiative

Participants in the Initiative, including Kameron, got to learn from some of the biggest icons in the comic book industry, making connections that will last a lifetime. Milestone's website describes the Initiative, part of DC's Talent Development Program, as "designed to identify, educate, spotlight, and empower the next generation of Black and diverse creators in our field so that the stories of the next century are truly reflective of the world around us."

Photo and artwork courtesy of Kameron White

Kameron was blown away by the opportunity to participate. "Honestly, I'm still trying to pinch myself and can't believe it's real. I was ecstatic!" he says. "It felt amazing knowing that I was going through a program that was going to push me and others and create amazing stories."

Kameron admits he was a little nervous and intimidated going in but he met so many like-minded creatives it helped put him at ease.

The artists of the group were given the opportunity to work with Tom Mandrake, an American comics artist famous for his work with DC Comics, and the Kubert School, a technical school focused on cartooning and graphic arts.

The Initiative helped them improve and build up their storytelling skills within comic art. Then, the artists were paired with writers to illustrate the stories the writers were working on.

"I was paired up with Jarred Lujan and our mentor, Clayton Henry, and Editor, Arianna Turturro, who helped Jarred and me as we worked on this story," says Kameron.

Kameron and Jarred's story is called "Often Imitated." The story follows the hero, Hardware, coming face-to-face with an android that was designed to both copy and destroy him. Though Hardware is covered in heavy machinery and uses technology to defeat the android, the story truly showcases his humanity and how important that is to his hero status.

This story will debut in DC's book *New Talent Showcase: The Milestone Initiative*, which will hit shelves June 6th.

For Kameron, the experience of attending the Initiative was game-changing. "Words cannot describe it," he says. "During the seminar we were able to meet everyone and the cohorts in person. It was such a great and unforgettable experience, especially with getting in-depth lessons and talks from a multitude of creators and speakers, as well as now having a new family with my fellow cohorts."

What's Next for Kameron

He just finished working on a chapter for the comic series *Hellbent*. He's also working on a graphic novel and an all-Indigenous Anthology that will feature Indigenous writers and artists.

He also says in the future, he'd love to work on a comic for Starfire, his favorite character.

In the meantime, he has this advice for fellow creators:

"Take your breaks and drink water!" ▮

Jewelry by Johan
JEWELRY RE-IMAGINED

Handcrafted in Minnesota with unique materials, including authentic meteorite. Schedule a free online video consultation today to start designing your dream rings!
651.321.9267
www.jewelrybyjohan.com

Ryan Coit

BY LAVENDER

The photographic eye captures our best, our worst, and everything else in-between.

Ryan Coit's eyes have captured many images. They are uplifting and beautiful. He has chronicled parts of our community we often forget about over time.

As his website explains up front: "For the past several years, Ryan Coit's life and photography has been influenced by his involvement in the [LGBTQ+] Community. Internationally recognized for presenting images that capture the beauty in all types of individuals expressing their sexuality and identity."

"When I first started photographing more leather and fetish subject matter," explained Coit, "I was always inspired by taking something that's dark and taboo and making it beautiful. A lot of times my photography's very simple and 'cause it's just showcasing the beauty that is within those fetishes and the people that participate in that."

In fact, you may have seen his work in our Pride issue for our profile of drag artists Betty Bang.

Coit's work has evolved over the years. He cites that it is because of the people he worked with. What lead us to name Coit for this award was the impact he has made to his subjects and those who have seen his work through this evolution. However, "when people say that I'm making an impact because it just feels the opposite," Coit explained, "that they're impacting me."

In response to this award, Coit was "just very flattered." Perhaps very humbled.

For bringing beauty from a different angle, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Ryan Coit for his Community Award this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of Ryan Coit

Balance your priorities for a more confident tomorrow.

Amie Burnett, JD, CFP®
Financial Advisor
952.921.3371
7101 York Ave S, Ste 330
Edina, MN 55435
marie.a.burnett@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/
marie.a.burnett

Ameriprise Financial®

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards Inc. owns the certification marks CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and CFP (with plaque design) in the U.S.
Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC.
© 2023 Ameriprise Financial, Inc.

Serving you for over 100 years!

SODERLIN
PLUMBING, HEATING & AIR

SINCE 1914

612-721-4080

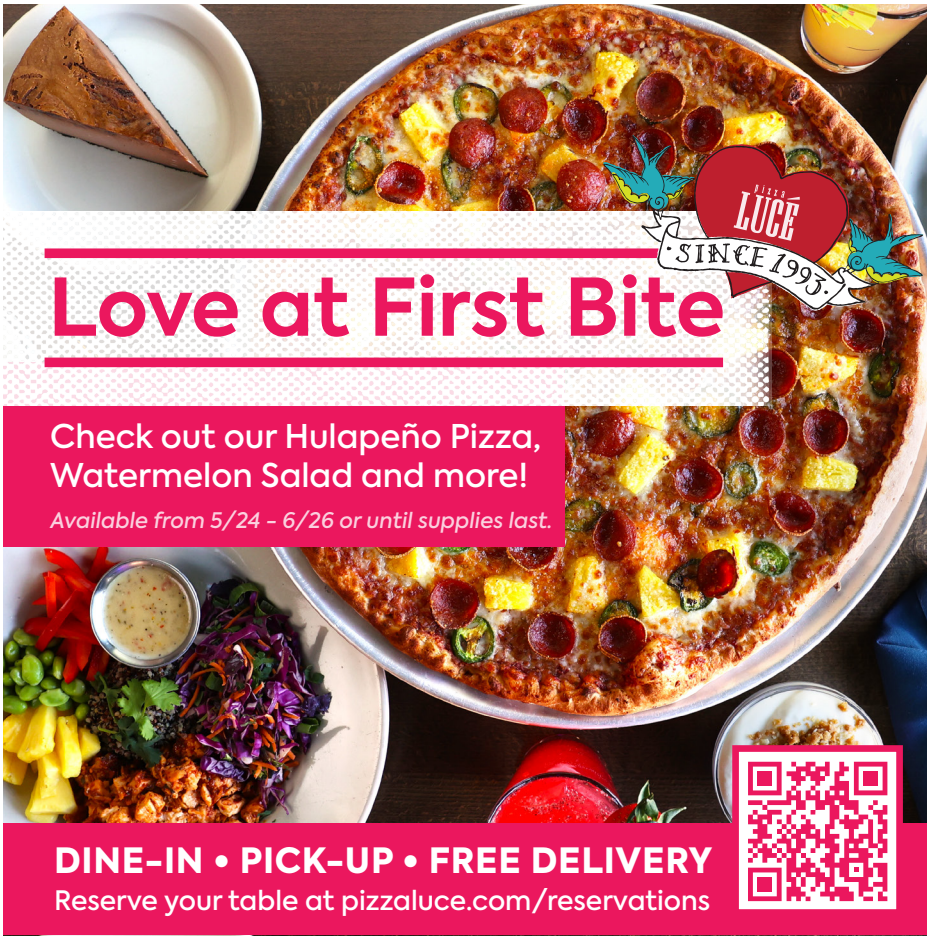
Boilers • Furnace • A/C
Water Heaters • Toilet • Faucets

Serving the entire Twin Cities Area.
Emergency Service Available.

WWW.SODERLIN.COM

Licensed, Bonded & Insured. LICENSE #58002PM & 3272MB

SODERLIN 100 YEARS 1914 - 2014



Love at First Bite

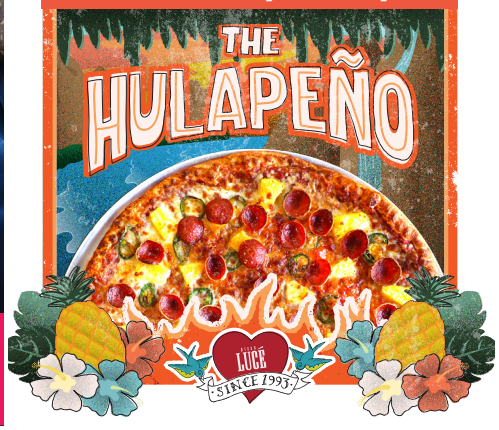
Check out our Hulapeño Pizza, Watermelon Salad and more!
Available from 5/24 - 6/26 or until supplies last.

DINE-IN • PICK-UP • FREE DELIVERY
Reserve your table at pizzaluce.com/reservations

AVAILABLE 5/24 - 8/1

NEW Gochujang Bowls
available with chicken, salmon or tofu

AVAILABLE 5/24 - 6/23



Jane Ramseyer Miller

BY LAVENDER

Leadership.

When you think of Jane Ramseyer Miller and her 27 years as Artistic Director at One Voice Mixed Chorus, that is the first word that describes her.

Considering her educational background – a Masters of Music in Choral Conducting and a Bachelor's in Psychology – you can see a pattern where Ramseyer Miller utilizes both in everything she has accomplished with OneVoice. The themes of each concert cycle reflect deeper meaning that explores what it means to be an LGBTQ+ human being.

Since arriving in the Twin Cities back in 1988, Ramseyer Miller has always been busy. Busy creating, bringing people together, and making them sing. And, what beautiful music comes from the voices she has brought together.

Since retirement from her position, Ramseyer Miller continues to work with the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses as their Artistic Director. In fact, she is already busy. "My next 14 months will be busy as Artistic Director of the GALA (LGBTQ) Choral Festival which will be held in Minneapolis in July 2024," explained Ramseyer Miller. "It is my role to program, schedule, and manage just under 200 concerts in 5 days. We'll have 3 stages running concurrently in Orchestra Hall, the Convention Center and Central Lutheran Church. Did I mention that we're expecting between 6-7,000 queer singers to descend upon our fair city for this festival? We'll be looking for lots of local volunteers so watch for that opportunity."

For guiding a community to lift their voices, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Jane Ramseyer Miller for her Community Award this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of Jane Ramseyer Miller

H&B GALLERY

The Twin Cities Premier Consignment and Estate Sale Services

With over 35 years of retail in Uptown H&B Gallery brings a level of knowledge and experience few can offer.

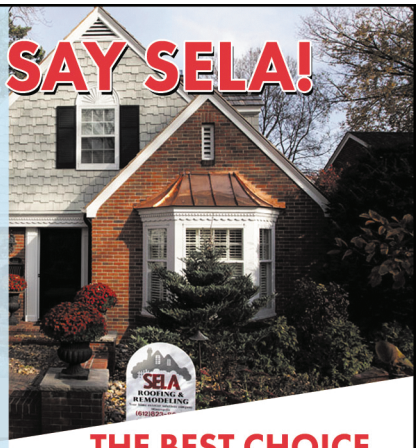
Come visit our well curated shop or on Instagram and Facebook

@handbgallery @HBGallery

www.handbgallery.com • 612-874-6436

Hours 10-5 Tuesday thru Saturday • 12-5 Sunday

JUST SAY SELA!



SELA ROOFING AND REMODELING

MN License #CR001050

Free Estimates - Call!

612-326-1716

www.selaroofing.com

Ask about our industry leading warranties!

STAR TRIBUNE READERS' CHOICE MINNESOTA'S Best 2022 GOLD WINNER

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

As a member of the Better Business Bureau, you can trust Sela to help you protect the investment you've made in your home!

MasterCard VISA AMERICAN EXPRESS DISCOVER

THE BEST CHOICE FOR RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL ROOFING

- Siding
- Windows
- Roof Repair
- Gutters
- FREE Hail Damage Assessment
- Storm Damage Restoration Specializing in Insurance Claims

OWENS CORNING PLATINUM PREFERRED CONTRACTOR

GAF Master Elite

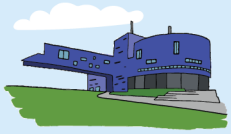
Hilton Minneapolis

PARK & STAY

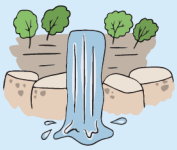
Explore downtown Minneapolis! Save by booking the Park and Stay package.

WALKER SCULPTURE GARDEN

STONE ARCH BRIDGE



THE GUTHRIE



MINNEHAHA FALLS

LAKE BDE BAKA SKA

BOOK ONLINE

bit.ly/HiltonMLPSParkStay

Hilton MINNEAPOLIS

Jean-Nickolaus Tretter

BY LAVENDER

On December 9, 2022, our community lost a key figure in keeping our history alive. He is our historian, our archivist, and a link to our past with our present and future.

Jean-Nickolaus Tretter began collecting materials from our community since the 1980s. In 2000, he donated his collection to the University of Minnesota Libraries, where it is currently housed. The Tretter Collection sits deep into the bluffs above the Mississippi River, right below the Elmer L. Andersen Library on the West Bank of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus. It may be hidden, but it is available to public on certain days of the week.

His collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies is home to 3,500 linear feet of material housing our community's history in Minnesota. The Tretter Collection website cites that their collection includes "books, periodicals, grey literature, personal and organizational records, zines and pamphlets, artifacts and ephemera, and audiovisual materials."

While centered on the history of the LGBTQ+ community in Minnesota, the collection has entries from across the nation and around the world. The Tretter Collection states that their materials stretches 58 languages. Moreover, the Collection also is a hub for LGBTQ+ ideas, that includes hosting panels, conversations within the community, and supporting events that reflect upon our past.

Tretter receives this award posthumously. It will be presented to the Tretter Collection.

In his memory, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Jean-Nickolaus Tretter, his family and the staff at the Tretter Collection for his Community Award this year. ∎

Photo by Lisa Vecoli

Play, Stay, Groom & Shop Here.

Dog's Day Out offers DIY and full service bathing and grooming in a snazzy modern space. Downtown Dogs provides daycare and boarding that pups and their busy parents love. Empowering dogs to come out of the kennel since 2004. Proud member of Quorum.

MN Kennel License #MN887499

DOWNTOWN DOGS
daycare + boarding
612.374.DOGS (3647) / dtdogs.com

DOG'S DAY OUT
full/self serve bath + grooming
612.255.3425 / dogsdaympls.com

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Going Out Coming In

LGBTQ+ SPACES IN DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS

JUNE 1 – OCTOBER 8, 2023

Exploring the sights, heart, and energy of Downtown Minneapolis's LGBTQ+ community spaces.

MILL CITY MUSEUM

Learn more
mnhs.info/OutIn

704 SOUTH 2ND ST.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55401

PRIDE TWIN CITIES

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd

BY LAVENDER

Their trajectory this year has been one to watch.

From our first cover of 2023, Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd sat front and center ensuring the lives of Trans and Non-Binary youth that they are loved and protected in the state of Minnesota.

In turn, Dr. Goepferd became the Grand Marshal of the Twin Cities Pride Ashley Rukes Parade. That, along with the Youth Champion Award from the QUEERSPACE Collective, has emboldened the Chief Education Officer and Medical Director of Gender Health at Children's Minnesota to break new ground in the area of uplifting and care for Trans and Non-Binary youth.

In a recent social media post on their LinkedIn page, Dr. Goepferd explained that they are "a pediatrician, a parent, and a person just like you. I have dedicated my professional career to making sure that all kids have what they need to thrive, and because of my identity and my love for my community, much of my professional life has been devoted to advocating for LGBTQ+ youth, and transgender and gender diverse kids and teens."

When we asked Dr. Goepferd how it felt to be named one of our Lavender Magazine Community Award recipients, they said they were "incredibly honored." Dr Goepferd added that "it really is an opportunity for me to reflect on the journey that I've been on personally and professionally since I arrived here 23 years ago."

Yet, the work continues for Dr. Goepferd in the field of providing essential healthcare to trans and non-binary youth. "Now the work really begins of how do we not only appropriately respond to the kids and families who are already here in Minnesota," Dr. Goepferd explained, "but how are we going to respond to the hundreds of kids and their families who are either going to be traveling to this state to continue their care, or considering relocating to Minnesota to live and become a part of our community? So, I think that's really the next phase of this work is making sure that people can actually access the care that's protected."

As they continue this important work, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd for their Community Award this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of Angela Kade Goepferd, MD

Illustration by Ry Macarayan (they/them)

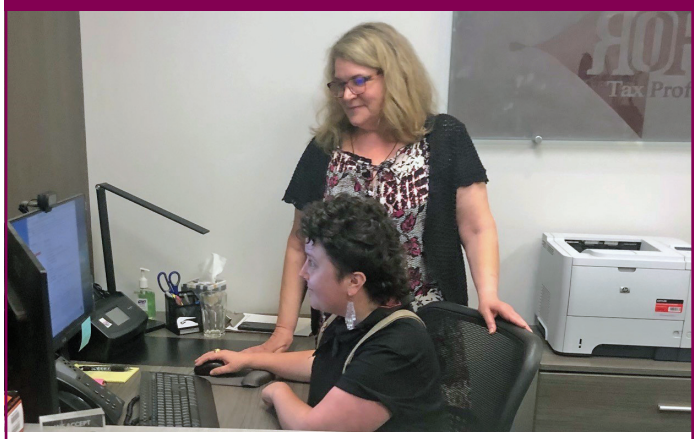
Expert sexual health care for all.

We create a space for everyone to receive the care they need. No matter what. Online or in person.

PPNCS.ORG
1.800.230.PLAN (7526)

Planned Parenthood®

Are you ready for a New Career??
Are you surrounded by people you can't relate to?



Come check out ROR Tax Professionals.
This is not your father's tax firm!

We are currently looking for tax professionals and we will even train the right candidate(s). Every Fall I teach an entry level tax class. So, experienced, or aspiring tax professionals give us a call!

PS. Even the coffee is good here.

ROR Tax Professionals

4500 Park Glen Rd.,
Ste. 100 • St. Louis Park
612-822-7177
RORTax.com

Solaris Companies
The Twin Cities' Finest Contractor

ARMOUR GUARD

ASK US ABOUT INSTALLING
HEATED GUTTER GUARDS!

Installs onto existing gutter to keep out debris during the summer and melt ice and snow during the winter.

Self-Regulating Heat Cable

Providing home construction and exterior renovation needs, including: **roofing, siding, windows, gutters, solar panel installations,** and **interior** & **exterior home remodels.**

(612) 402-1173 | erik@solariscos.com | www.solariscos.com

MORE 'UM's PER HOUR THAN ANY OTHER STATION.

100.7 FM + 104.5 FM

RADIO K
770AM 100.7&104.5FM
Real College Radio

THE REMODELER YOU CAN TRUST

Additions & Dormers / Kitchens & Bathrooms / Custom Cabinetry
Whole House Renovation / Porches & Sun-Rooms / Finished Basements

4330 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55409
612.821.1100 / 651.690.3442 MN LIC #BC378021
www.houseliftinc.com

House Lift
REMODELER

Xay Yang

BY LAVENDER

Being a community builder takes time, patience, determination, and drive.

In the case of Xay Yang, the Executive Director and the inaugural Queer Justice Director at Transforming Generations, it is about bridging and gathering the LGBTQ+ Hmong community together. In the latter capacity, Yang created programming for this community through mental health services and the Sib Hlub drop-in healing space.

Last year, the Drag Tale Times was created as, Yang explained, "an opportunity for LGBTQ families to come and read and engage with drag artists and the other part of that program is for us to build a pipeline for drag artists to get formal opportunities to do their work and build out their resume and profile, and so we've been doing that."

One of the most serious issues facing many communities has been domestic violence. Transforming Generations offers advocacy services for LGBTQ+ victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, as well as for youth who are experiencing family violence due to homophobia and transphobia.

There's work ahead for Yang and Transforming Generations. That including building a national network of LGBTQ+ Hmong communities to further explore the intersection of identities and cultures. That's just scratching the surface for Yang.

While processing being named to this award Yang stated that she thinks that "not everybody who's doing this work has been formally celebrated and in this way. And, so, I recognize the privilege and really excited to be part of this."

For being a trailblazer by breaking barriers and stigmas, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Xay Yang for her Community Award this year. ▮

Photo courtesy of Xay Yang

Foster Adopt Minnesota
Supporting adoptive, foster & kinship families
fosteradoptmn.org
SUPPORT EDUCATION RESOURCES

Find us at the Twin Cities Pride Parade!

LES JONES ROOFING
4.75 Rating Google
SERVING THE MPLS AREA IN ALL WEATHER CONDITIONS FOR OVER 40 YEARS.
952.206.6775

BBB A+ Rating

NATIONAL ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION
Les Jones Roofing | 941 W 80th St, Bloomington, MN 55420 | 952-206-6775

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth face a mental health crisis, including too-high rates of suicide, depression, and anxiety.

Rainbow Health provides culturally responsive, high quality, affirming mental health care to youth ages 14-25 and connects them to other vital supports they need to thrive.

If you or a loved one is looking for help, reach out to Rainbow Health online or find us at a Pride event this summer!

RAINBOW HEALTH

rainbowhealth.org

Leif Hagen

BY LAVENDER

By day, Leif Hagen is the President & LPL Financial Advisor at Achievement Financial in Eagan. Yet, he has a second hat he wears as Charter Club President of the Minnesota Pride Rotary.

The work the Minnesota Pride Rotary does is not unique. However, it is one of the few chapters of the service organization that is predominantly LGBTQ+. At its forefront is Leif Hagen.

The Minnesota Pride Rotary club does more than its share of community service to our community. From Drag Brunches to Car Shows, the club also does its fair share of community involvement and support throughout the year with fervent frequency and volume.

Though the efforts at Minnesota Pride Rotary, Hagen and his fellow club members have supported various organizations, such as Avenues For Youth, Clare Housing, the Minnesota Backpack Project, the Aliveness Project, The Bridge For Youth Homeless Shelter, and The Link MN.

As Hagen said, "we've only just begun." With just 36 members at the Minnesota Pride Rotary, Hagen explained that "it took a lot of work and a lot of hours to kind of get the rocket ship off the launch pad, and now that it's in the air watch out now because we're going forward full steam."

In response to his being named one of Lavender Magazine's Community Awards winners, Hagen said "I'm really surprised and honored and excited, I think it's a really great thing."

With the work he has continues to do, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Leif Hagen for his Community Award this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of Leif Hagen

Reproductive Medicine and Infertility Associates

PROUD TO SUPPORT
Family Building
in the LGBTQ Community
Learn More About Our Services at
www.rmia.com
rm&ia
reproductive medicine and infertility associates

Meaningful work.
Looking for a flexible schedule doing something that matters?

Watch the video and learn more about applying at
https://rah-tc.net/employment/

ROOSTERS
MEN'S GROOMING CENTER

RESTORE. REVIVE. REFUEL.

SERVICE PROVIDED
- Precision Haircuts
- Color Treatments
- Gift Cards Available

AVEDA
THE ART AND SCIENCE OF PURE FLOWER AND PLANT ESSENCES

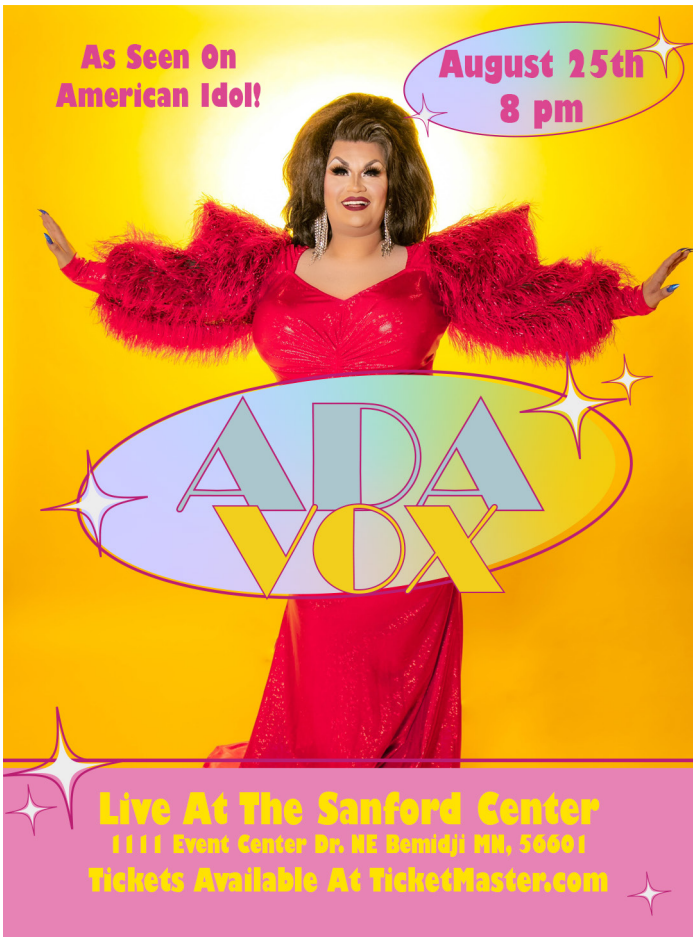
The West End
1683 West End Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55416
(763) 546-1140

Minnetonka Crossing
6001 Shady Oak Rd. STE 160
Minnetonka, MN 55343
(952) 935-0505

Woodbury City Center
1960 Donegal Dr.
Woodbury, MN 55125
(651) 348-6676

Download the Roosters app or book online at www.roostersmgc.com/locations
facebook.com/RoostersMensGroomingCenter

THE CLASSIC AMERICAN BARBERSHOP



KURSIV

WOMAN-OWNED
MINNESOTA-GROWN
ORGANIC CANNABIS

Visit us at PRIDE!
Booth R15

WWW.KURSIVORGANICS.COM

From chaos to oasis we see things differently.
To us overgrown and underused portions of your lawn are opportunities waiting to be realized. Become the house on the block that everyone wants to be. Let Dirty Boys help you.

OUR SERVICES
- Walkways
- Patios
- Firepits
- Fireplaces
- Retaining Walls
- Outdoor Kitchens
- Garden Beds

Perfectly Arranged Planters℠

Join our Perfectly Arranged Planters Program and every season we'll deliver a new, artistically designed planter right to your front door.

www.DirtyBoysLandscaping.com

Dot Belstler

BY LAVENDER

Leaving a legacy is something we celebrate every day in our community. When an ally comes to us and leads, it guides us towards navigating the tough waters we often wade towards in becoming a community.

This is one way to describe Dot Belstler. When she was the Executive Director of Twin Cities Pride, she ensured that the "show must go on." Through rainstorms, humid heat, and the occasional perfect day – the show went on.

For 13 years, Bestler led the way by opening up Loring Park and Hennepin Avenue every late June for the hundreds of thousands of people to celebrate our community and culture.

Belstler's response to this award was full of surprise. She even wondered if she would be among the selected few chosen for this award. "'Wow, can I be in their company?,'" Belstler responded, "'Is that really the thing?' So very humbled also just to say, "Okay, wow. Maybe, do I belong with them or not?" Maybe somebody believes I should be."

Even though she has stepped away as Twin Cities Pride's Executive Director, Belstler is still connected with them. She is involved with fundraising and grant research, and just being available to be of help to current Executive Director Andi Otto and the staff at Twin Cities Pride.

Even though she is not is the building all the time, Belstler is making sure that the show goes on.

For all she has done every June, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates Dot Belstler for her Community Award in the Ally category this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of Dot Belstler

FAMILY TREE CLINIC received a top score on the LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Index

HEALTHCARE EQUALITY INDEX
LGBTQ+ HEALTHCARE EQUALITY
HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FOUNDATION 2022
LEADER

Find out why we're one of the top 5 health care facilities in the state for LGBTQ+ care.

1919 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403
612 473-0800 familytreeclinic.org

We do good work for nice people!

RTR TEAMS

★ROOFING★
★WINDOWS★
★SIDING★
★PRE-PLAN SPECIALISTS★

5 Star ★★★★★
World Class Service! BC#759085

612-508-9396 Send text for fast response

RendaTheRoofer@gmail.com
Our mission is to ... "Be of Service"

Our Mission is to End Veteran Homelessness in Minnesota

If you ever served the Armed Forces and are in need of housing, or if you know a Veteran in need, please connect with us today.

- Housing Services
- Legal Services
- Employment Assistance

WE SERVE ★★★★★ MAC-V.org

SOCIAL MEDIA
@MACVORG

WEBSITE
WWW.MAC-V.ORG

MACV
Ending Veteran Homelessness

Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League

BY LAVENDER

Sports can bring people together.

This is a fact since 1979, when the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League began play. Over 44 seasons, dozens of teams came together to participate in league play, tournaments, and eventually to play in the Gay Softball World Series.

The TCGSL is a proud member of the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance, and an upstanding member of our LGBTQ+ community here in Minnesota. With an open door policy, everyone participates no matter who they are.

This season, there are 52 teams with 1,000 players participating in the league – all convening at Bossen Park in Minneapolis. Some teams have been around for decades, while there have been some new ones over time.

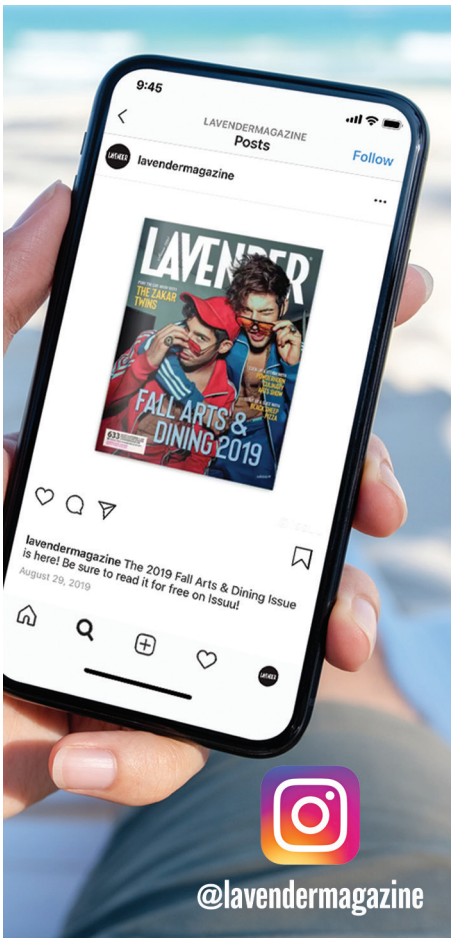
The league also hosts the North Star Classic every Memorial Day Weekend in Eagan. It is a tradition that brings not only TCGSL teams in the tournament, but teams from beyond Minnesota. The league also hosts an all-star game for their athletes in the middle of their Summer Season. Once the champions have been crowned, they move on Fall Ball, where it gives players a better chance to know each other in a less formal competition.

In response to this award, Chris Overlie, Commissioner of the TCGSL said in. statement: "The Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League (TCGSL) is honored to be named a recipient of *Lavender Magazine's* Community Awards in the non-profit category. We are grateful to be recognized for our work to provide a fun and inclusive environment for all players, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

The one constant is that the people who play in the TCGSL are always having fun – win or lose. This is how the league builds community and have served it beyond just taking the field. Overlie further stated that "[w]e are excited to continue our journey as a community-based organization that provides a safe and inclusive space for all to play softball and have fun. We look forward to seeing you on the field!"

For giving everyone a chance to be a part of a community through sport, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League on their Community Award in the non-profit category this year. ∎

Photo courtesy of the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League



No Place Like Home RE/MAX Results Realty

BY LAVENDER

If you think of No Place Like Home RE/MAX Results Realty as just Amy Ruzick, Kay T. Johnson, and Chris Goble, you may not see everything that has earned this distinctive honor.

In fact, if you think they only do real estate services, you're just scratching the surface. Ruzick, Johnson, and Gable stand up for our community. By being involved with Quorum, the local LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce. And, by being involved in our community.

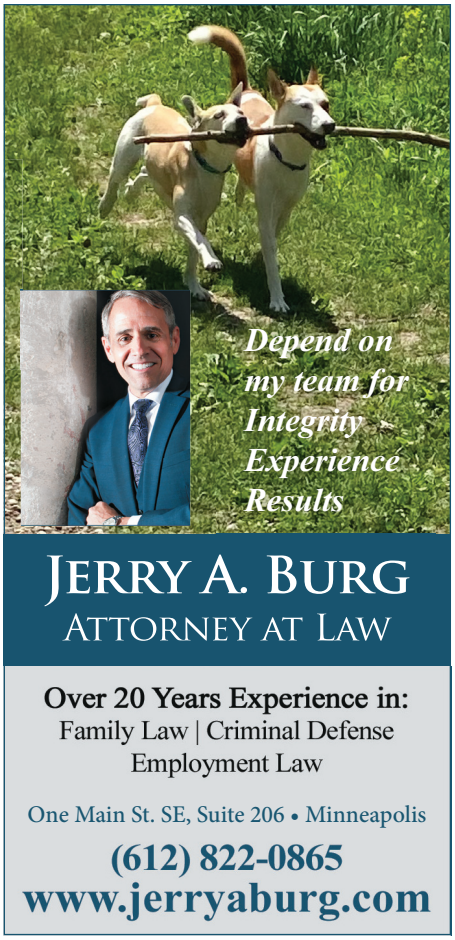
"When we sponsor something," Ruzick explains, "we typically show up, and then these nonprofits are getting exposure, and we like to put out there what we're doing. Also, the nonprofits receive the money and not some tech company in another state who's selling me zip codes."

Thus, there is a vision Ruzick shares with her fellow business community members. "I would love to see more businesses," Ruzick said, "and maybe in fact all businesses, make that a part of their business practices, even the small self-employed group of people. Putting your advertising dollars where your values are makes good sense."

As for the award itself, Ruzick, Johnson, and Goble all echo the sentiment of being surprised and honored for the work they do for the LGBTQ+ community in their esteemed capacity.

For being in the business of service to our community, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates the team at No Place Like Home RE/MAX Results Realty for their Community Award in the Small Business category. ▮

Photo by Tammy Brice Creative



HealthPartners

BY LAVENDER

Being a corporate citizen is turning on a beacon to direct us to their goods and services. This is even more important when we seek a healthcare provider for ourselves and our community.

What does HealthPartners do for us?

For 61 years, Bloomington-based HealthPartners has served us through 55 primary care clinics, 22 urgent care centers, eight hospitals and 24 dental clinics. They do so with a staff of 26,000, including 1,800 physicians and 60 dentists. In all, they cared for 1.2 million patients on an annual basis.

They focus on taking care of us, whether it is gender-affirming care or providing mental health services for LGBTQ patients – or everything else in-between.

The professionals of HealthPartners' LGBTQ+ Colleague Resource Group are visible at Twin Cities Pride – whether it is in the parade or at the festival in Loring Park. Their contingent is 150 strong every year. In addition, they provide support and education to their staff towards creating a workplace that is collaborative and inviting to their LGBTQ staff.

In terms of outreach, HealthPartners also connect with various LGBTQ+ organizations across the region. In 2018, they were named Corporate Champions of Pride by Twin Cities Pride.

More importantly, they stay true to their corporate cultural mantra: "Every person welcomed. Every person included. Every person valued." That includes LGBTQ+ employees and patients alike.

As a proud organization serving our community, *Lavender Magazine* congratulates HealthPartners er for their Community Award in the Corporation category this year. ▮

Photo by Randy Stern

HEALTH FAIRVIEW
PRIDE TWIN CITIES
Presenting Sponsor of Living Well Park

Make health and wellness a part of your weekend at Twin Cities Pride.

Visit us in Living Well Park, located in the north corner of the park, for sunscreen, blood pressure checks, healthy snacks, and informational speakers.

Learn about M Health Fairview's commitment to equitable, inclusive care for people of all genders and sexual orientations. Talk with representatives from the M Health Fairview Comprehensive Gender Care Program, Pride Alliance Group for Equity (PAGE), Food Is Medicine Program, and more.

mhealthfairview.org/2023TCPride

Lifetime No Crack Guarantee.
HAGE
CONCRETE WORKS
SINCE 1930
612-861-4243
HageConcrete.com

THANK YOU

to our Sponsors for allowing us to be the LARGEST FREE PRIDE

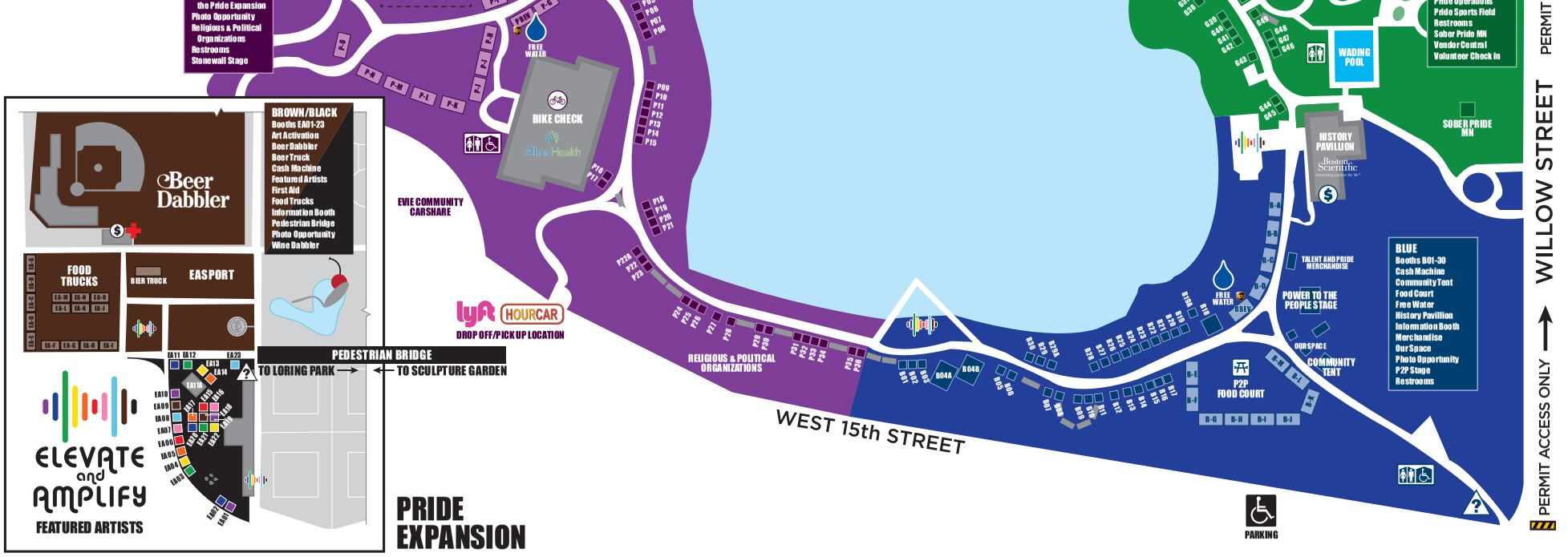
PRIDE TWIN CITIES

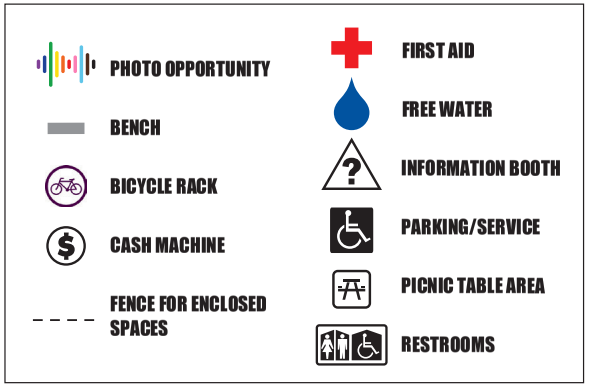
TARGET
DELTA
UNITEDHEALTH GROUP
Metro Transit
usbank
Takeda
Xcel Energy
MITSUBISHI MOTORS Drive your Ambition
WHITE BEAR MITSUBISHI
MAYO CLINIC
General Mills
HEALTH FAIRVIEW
deluxe
Medtronic
AARP Minnesota
thrivent
MORRIE'S Minnetonka Subaru Brooklyn Park Subaru
3M Science. Applied to Life.™
sleep number
MALL OF AMERICA
TRULY
Abbott
Medica
URBAN GROWLER BREWING COMPANY SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
Huntington
Tierra Encantada Spanish Immersion Childcare & Preschool
myTalk 107.1
Caribou COFFEE
Cub
ups
CHS
CARE COUNSELING
PAIR OF THIEVES
COLLECTIVE MEASURES
girl scouts river valleys
GREAT RIVER ENERGY
Audi Minneapolis Audi St. Paul
Quantum FIBER
RYAN
UNLEASHED Hounds & Hops
SPEAK MPLS
Allina Health
Boston Scientific
StarTribune
PrairieCare A Division of Newport Healthcare
PNC BANK
TEEF FOR LIFE
LUCKY SHOTS PICKLEBALL CLUB
Lime
RAINBOW HEALTH
O'NEIL Group
kw KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY INTEGRITY LAKES
Becoming Together Therapy and Wellness
NEW HORIZON ACADEMY
NORTH MEMORIAL HEALTH
MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO
kindbody
HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
PUMA
spaar
CARLSON
AM 950

PRIDE™
TWIN CITIES

Metro Transit

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING SAFE AND FREE RIDES TO PRIDE





DISCLAIMER: This Map reflects the information provided by Twin Cities Pride and is accurate as of deadline day when they submitted it. Locations and Schedule subject to change.

Twin Cities LGBTQ+ History Tours

The **Twin Cities LGBTQ+ History Tours** are an ongoing collaboration between Twin Cities Pride and the Minnesota Historical Society.

The tours comprise fifty-eight sites across the Twin Cities (thirty-eight in Minneapolis, including Loring Park, and twenty in St. Paul). The sites can be explored from anywhere, via tablet, desktop computer, or smartphone. Users can enable location services on their smart devices to understand their current location in proximity to any given site listed on the map. Users can explore beyond the maps by following the external links to MNopedia, online essays, and newspaper articles.

TC Pride and MNHS welcome suggestions for future sites and have included a suggestion form with the maps for community members to make their voices heard.

Colored box indicates the Zone that each vendor is located in.

- 2D Con
- 3M
- 5th Congressional District Green Party
- A Fink & Ink
- **AARP**
- ABCbyKarla
- ACLU-MN
- Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union
- Agate Housing and Services
- Airport Foundation MSP
- All Energy Solar
- All God's Children MCC Church
- Allianz Life
- **Allina Health**
- **AM950**
- American Family Insurance
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- American Sign Language
- ANEW Chemical Health Services
- Animal Emergency & Referral Center of Minnesota
- Animal Humane Society
- Annex Teen Clinic
- Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- Anti-War Committee
- Ariann's Girls
- Art Activation - Before I Die... Candy Chang
- Art Activation - Art Activation - I Am...
- Art of Gigi, LLC
- ArtCrusher
- ArtCrusher
- Artifacts of Joy
- Arts@MSP
- AT&T
- Atomic Polish
- Aveda Arts and Sciences Institute Minneapolis
- Avenues for Youth
- Awesome Industries
- Baby Alpaca
- Baby Kat Aesthetic & Majora's Bakehouse
- Ballet Co.Laboratory
- Basecamp Fitness
- BDO USA, LLP
- Be Sparktacular
- Be The Match
- Beardy Goodness
- Beauty & the wick
- Beauty Through Chaos
- **Becoming Together Therapy and Wellness**
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities
- Big Raven Yoga
- Bisexual Organizing Project
- blacksheepmosaics
- Blue Cross Blue Shield MN
- BluePearl Pet Hospital
- Body by Pride
- Bondesque
- **Boston Scientific**
- Bottle Cap Retro
- Bottoms Up
- Boudoir Belle Reproductions
- Brave Bear
- Brenna M & Co
- Bridging
- Burton Art Studios
- Butterfly Kisses
- Calliope Women's Chorus
- Canvas Health
- Care Counseling
- Cargo Bike Soap
- Caricatures By Nate
- Carpe Diem CBD
- CCRM Minneapolis
- Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
- CherriTree Designs
- Cheryse LLC
- Children's Home Society of Minnesota
- CHILDREN'S MINNESOTA
- Children's Theatre Company
- Christopher Straub
- **CHS**
- City of Minneapolis
- Coldwell Banker Realty MN|WI
- Colibri Guatemalan Jewelry
- Colon Cancer Coalition
- Compassionate Action for Animals
- Corazon Clothing
- Cornerstone Day One
- Creative Juice
- Cub Foods
- Culitvated CBD
- Curches of the Downtown Area
- Cut It Out Salon
- Cyberia Computer Club
- Dakota County Government
- Dance TV
- Danielle Anderson - Raymond James Riverdale
- Daughter of Ra
- Deb Reutter Jewelry
- Department of Veteran Affairs - Veteran Benefit Administration
- Designed By Hannah
- Dignity Twin Cities
- Dirty Boys Landscaping/Perfectly Arranged Planters
- Do Wood Son
- Drag Syndicate
- Drew Moon Arts
- Dunwoody College of Technology GSA
- Durex
- Ebenezer Senior Living
- Ecolab
- Ellie Mental Health
- Emma Skala Pottery
- Encouraging Leaders
- Equitable Advisors
- ERAMN / MN NOW
- Escape Space
- Esther Edna Clothing
- Evie Community Carshare
- Face to Face Health and Counseling
- Fair Anita
- Fairview
- FairVote Minnesota
- Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation
- Family Services
- Family Tree Clinic
- Farmaste Animal Sanctuary
- FastTrackerMN.org
- Fathers Group
- Fellington Post
- Feminist Book Club
- First Christian Church Minneapolis
- Fjallraven
- Flex Fitness MN
- Flip the Script
- Focused Clothing
- Folly Lolly
- For Goodness Socks
- Friends of Loring Park/Citizens for a Loring Park Community
- Fulbright Association Minnesota Chapter
- Fuzzbutt Boutique
- Garrett Larson State Farm
- Gay for Good
- Gay Softball World Series
- GayMortgage.com- Angie Sherer Team
- Geek Partnership Society
- Geeky And Kinky
- Gender Inclusive Schools LLC
- Gender Justice
- **General Mills**
- Gift House
- Glamazon
- Glass Volleyball
- Glitter Division
- God Glam It
- Grainy Brain Wood Creations
- Gray Duck Plumbing
- Great MN Schools
- Guardian ad Litem Program
- Guys&Ties
- Hamline University
- Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School and Foundation
- Health Care for All Minnesota
- HealthPartners/Park Nicollet
- Heatherly Studios
- Hennepin County Emergency Management & Public Health
- Hennepin County Library
- Hennepin Health
- Hennepin Healthcare
- Hired
- Homebody MN
- Hopkins VirtualEDU
- **Human Rights Campaign**
- HumanistsMN
- Hunt for Variety
- **Huntington Bank**
- Huxley Optical
- IARC
- IKEA Minneapolis
- Indigo Sun Jewelry LLC
- Integer
- It Takes A Village MN
- J-Pride (JFCS)
- James Ballentine Uptown VFW #246
- JAY VICTORIA Clothing Co.
- Jean Tretter Art Collection
- Jewels by Xaviea
- Jill Whitney-Birk Mixed Media Arts
- Joel Itman Art
- Kim's Kaleidescope
- **kindbody**
- KMKDesignsllc
- Knit & Bolt
- KnownCautions
- Kobi Co.
- Kooka beeswax
- Kursiv Organics
- Kyros Care PBC
- Ladies of the Lakes
- LETTERING UNLIMITED
- Libertarian Party of Minnesota
- Life Time
- Linda Clayton Art
- Long Dog Apparel LLC
- Loon and Beau
- Lucky Shots Pickleball Club
- Luxjoy & Comfort
- LynLake Centers for WellBeing
- M.A.D.E. (Minnesota Adult Diaper Enthusiasts)
- Macalester College
- MacPhail Center for Music
- Mada Mehndi
- Madeline By Nature
- Magic Moots House of Sparkles
- Magnetic Originals
- Maji Designs Jewelry
- Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota
- **Mayo Clinic**
- **Medica**
- Medical MaryJane
- **Medtronic**
- Melrose Center
- MELSA: Twin Cities Metro Public Libraries
- MessyUnicorn
- **Metro Transit**
- Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
- Mikhamik House of Arts
- Minneaoplis Mayhem Rugby Football Club
- Minneapolis Area Realtors
- Minneapolis Mehndi & Henna
- Minneapolis VA Health Care System (MVAHCS)
- **Minneasota United FC**
- Minnesota Alliance on Crime
- Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
- Minnesota Atheists
- Minnesota Attorney General's Office
- Minnesota Aurora
- Minnesota Autism Society
- MINNESOTA AWESOME/Wheatheadz
- Minnesota Community Care
- Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: Queer and Allies Employee Resource Group
- Minnesota Elite Home Team - Keller Williams Classic Realty NW
- Minnesota Greyhound Rescue
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Minnesota Housing
- Minnesota Leather Pride
- Minnesota National Guard Diversity and Inclusion Office
- Minnesota Orchestra
- Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance
- Minnesota Philharmonic Orchestra
- Minnesota Pride Rotary Club
- **Minnesota Public Radio**
- Minnesota Recovery Connection
- Minnesota Regional Prides
- Minnesota Renaissance Festival
- Minnesota Sober Pride
- Minnesota State
- Minnesota Teamsters Pride
- Minnesota Timberwolves & Lynx
- Minnesota Transitions Charter School
- **Minnesota Twins**
- Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance
- Minnesota United Methodist Reconciling Congregations
- **Minnesota Vikings**
- Minnesota Vixen Football
- **Minnesota Whitecaps**
- **Minnesota Wild**

- Mio Soaps
- Mitchell Hamline School of Law
- MN Art Therapy Association & Adler Graduate School
- MN Council on Disability
- MN LGBTQ+ Therapists Network
- MN Pocket Pet Rescue
- MN T-Girls
- MNclusive Employee Resources Group
- MNeurodivergent
- MNPoly
- MNYPAA X Host Committee
- **Morries Subaru**
- Mounds Park Academy
- Moments in Time
- Move Minnesota
- My Pit Bull is Family
- My Talk 107.1
- Myra Lynne Art
- Mystic Treasures
- NAKED MINNESOTA
- NAMI Minnesota
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Nash inc
- Natalie Lyon Agency- Farmers Insurance
- NATURAL ROOTS T-SHIRTS & ACCESSORIES
- Nauti Adventures
- Neighborhood HealthSource
- Nerdyfae (formerly Doo's Wingalings)
- Nivon Wellness Center, LLC
- No Joke Tattoo Studio
- No Limits Printing
- Normandale Community College
- **North Memorial Health**
- North Star Roller Derby
- Northstar Behavioral Health
- Northwestern Mutual
- NSGRA
- NUWAY Alliance
- Nystrom Treatment
- One World Boutique
- Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
- Osseo Area Schools
- oSTEM @ Minnesota
- Outfront Minnesota
- **Pair of Thieves**
- PALINDROME
- Pallay craft
- Patrick Nailon
- Peace Corps
- Pentacle Pursuits
- People Incorporated Mental Health Services
- PFund Foundation
- Pickles + Ocho
- Pin Daddies
- Pink Cloud Foundation
- Pit Squad Rescue MN
- **Planned Parenthood**
- Pluto's Authentic Witching Service
- **PNC Bank**
- Ponderosa Sky Designs
- Poppy Boutique by Kimi & Rob
- **Prairie Care**
- Pride Institute
- Pride Merchandise
- Pride Scouts
- Prime Therapeutics
- Prime Timers - Minneapolis/St. Paul
- Pro-Choice Minnesota
- Proof Alliance
- PT Rocks and Gems
- **PUMA Eagan Outlet Store**
- Puppyhead Products
- Quatrefoil Library
- Queen On The Scene - Inappropriately Awesome Enamel Pins
- Queer Birth Project
- Queer Grace Community
- Queerly Beloved Events Co.
- QUEERSPACE collective
- Quorum
- Rainbow Love
- Rainbow Wardrobe
- Ram's Head Fencing
- Ramsey County
- Ramsey County/Ramsey County Social Services
- RECLAIM
- Red Door Clinic
- Red Lotus Tattoo
- Redbull
- Renewal by Andersen
- ReSound
- REUSE Minnesota
- Revival Candle Studio
- Richfield Public Schools
- Riverrun Acreage LLC
- RMIA
- **Ryan Companies**
- Sand - Rose Crystal Co
- Sankalpa Therapy and Wellness Center
- Sarah Janes Makery
- Save-A-Bull
- SaveTheBottoms!!! Foundation
- Science Museum of Minnesota
- Scout
- Seagate Technology
- Sebastian Rothe
- Second Harvest Heartland
- Secondhand Hounds
- see carrie color
- Sendoff-Funerals Reimagined
- Set Adrift Art
- Sexual Violence Center
- Shanai Henna
- Shangri-La Crafts and Gifts
- Shawn Lohse Art
- She Rock She Rock
- Shout Out Loud - Suicide Prevention
- Silver Circle
- Skittles (Mars)
- Snuggle House Foundation
- Spirit of St. Stephen's Catholic Community
- Splendid Bohemians
- Spyhouse Coffee Roasters
- St. Paul Park Marathon Petroleum
- St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church
- stace of spades
- Stacie Garies
- Standout Proud
- **Star Tribune**
- Starshine Plush LLC
- Steve Rummler HOPE Network
- Stonewall DFL
- Stonewall Sports Twin Cities
- Students for Socialist Revolution
- Studio 606
- SuperVibe Energy Lounge
- **Target**
- Team Trans Twin Cities Ice Hockey
- Tempations (Mars)
- That Midwestern Mom
- The American Dream Machine by The Spahr Team
- The Arc Minnesota
- The Bridge for Youth
- The Christmas Corner
- The Family Development Center
- The Link
- The Michael Kaslow Team
- The Minnesota Freedom Band
- The Nature Conservancy
- The No Bullying Movement
- The Pillars of Prospect Park
- The Retreat
- The Rowdy Tailor
- The Satanic Temple Minnesota
- The Table MPLS
- The Twistery
- The Wildwood Theatre
- The Workshop Mpls
- Thread Joy
- **Thrivent Finacial**
- **Tierra Encantada**
- TIGERRS
- TishasQTees
- Trans Soup
- Transforming Families
- TransPainter - Rae Senarighi
- Trixi's Twisted Wands
- Tryst Trigger Artworks
- Tubman
- TurnSignl
- Twin Cities Con
- Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus
- Twin Cities Pagan Pride
- Twin Cities Queer Hockey Association
- Twin Cities Reiki Master
- UCare
- **United Health Group**
- University of Minnesota
- **Unleased Hounds & Hops**
- Upper Midwest Great Dane Rescue
- Urban Tails Pet Supply
- **US Bank**
- USTA Northern
- Valley Medical & Wellness
- Volunteer Check-In
- Waabooz Beading
- Walker Art Center
- Walser Automotive Group
- Watershed High School
- Wenonah Body Lab
- **White Bear Mitsubishi**
- Wil Natzel
- Wildly Connected Photography
- WyntersEnd Workshop
- **Xcel Energy**
- Yarnival
- Yinglong Kung Fu
- Your Home Improvement Company/Bath Planet

*Twin Cities Pride sponsors listed in bold

FOOD COURT VENDORS

YELLOW FOOD COURT

- Best Way
- Boki Gelato LLC
- Cheese Curds Tacos
- El Burrito Mercado
- Jerry's Cherry Lemonade and Shaved Ice
- Latin American Cuisine LLC
- Lu's Food Truck
- Pharaohs Gyros
- PIEROGI2GOGI
- Quality Food International-Seafood Market
- Taulelle Concessions
- Wonders Ice Cream Company

BLUE FOOD COURT

- CORN HOLE
- Hosea gourmet
- Keo's Shave Ice LLC
- Mabel's Old-fashioned Kettle Corn
- Nash inc
- Red's Savoy Pizza
- Rusty Taco
- SCHRODER CONCESSIONS, Inc.
- Taulelle Concessions
- Third Space Cafe
- Xstream Cuisine LLC
- Westrums Corndogs

PURPLE FOOD COURT

- Amish Annie Donuts & Lemonade
- Best Way
- Boki Gelato LLC
- Caribou Coffee
- Carnival Concessions
- Cookie Dough Bliss Twin Cities
- Infuzn Foods LLC
- Jerry's Cherry Lemonade and Shaved Ice
- Juicebox Inc
- Just The Meats
- Philicious Phillys
- Powl
- Quality Food International-Seafood Market
- Taulelle Concessions
- Tom Thumb Mini Donuts

PINK FOOD COURT

- El Burrito Mercado
- Jakarta Cafe
- KCM EGGROLLS
- Philly Station

BROWN FOOD COURT

- Boki Gelato LLC
- Cheese Curds Tacos
- El Burrito Mercado
- Habanero Tacos Food Truck
- KRAZD FOODNATIK MN
- Northeast Pretzels
- Que Tal Street Eats
- Sandy's Grill & Italian Ice
- Taco Libre
- Thai Thai Street Food
- Top Dog
- Beverages by UPS

Twin Cities Pride
Dykes on Bikes
Rainbow Flag
Bi Flag
Trans Flag
Leather Pride
Grand Marshal Dr. Angela Kade Goepferd
Community Champion of Pride
Children's Minnesota
Minnesota Governor Tim Walz
City of Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey
City of Saint Paul Mayor Melvin Carter
Minneapolis City Council
White Bear Mitsubishi
Delta
North Star Gay Rodeo
QUEERSPACE collective
Transforming Families (Outfront)
Roxy's Cabaret
Great Northern Region Car Club
Cargill
Minnesota Wild
J-Pride
Minneapolis Mayhem Rugby Football Club
HealthPartners
Minnesota Department of Transportation: Queer and Allies Employee Resource Group
Can Can Wonderland
Minnesota United FC
Minnesota AFL-CIO
KS95
RBC Wealth Management
The Minnesota Freedom Band
Imperial Court of Minnesota
Klobuchar for Minnesota
Angie Craig for Congress
Minnesota Timberwolves & Lynx
Queer Caucus of the Minnesota Legislature
3M
Stonewall DFL
Annex Teen Clinic
The Aliveness Project
CLUES (comunidades latinas unidas en servicio)
Tierra Encantada
General Mills
Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
Medica
Greater Twin Cities United Way
St. David's Episcopal Church
WTW
Ulteig Engineers Inc.
Minneapolis Public Schools
Spirit of St. Stephen's Catholic Community
Twin Cities Country Dancers
Thomson Reuters
Nordstrom
Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Centro Restaurant Group
Best Buy
Sun Country Airlines
Body by Pride
Sarah McPeck presents The Big Fat Comedy Hour
Hennepin Healthcare
Travelers Insurance
Cub
Minnesota United Methodist Reconciling Congregations
University of Minnesota
Comcast
Minnesota Twins
St Paul Saints Baseball Club
Costumers for a Cause
Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ Pride
M Health Fairview
Target
Open Arms of Minnesota
Minnesota State Fair
Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ
Minnesota Department of Health
MNclusive Employee Resources Group
St. Paul Winter Carnival Royal Family
BDO USA, LLP
Lathrop GPM
InterContinental Saint Paul
Audi Minneapolis and St. Paul
Minnesota Whitecaps
Foster Adopt Minnesota
Kare 11
Carmichael Lynch
Consulate General of Canada
SPS Commerce, Inc.
Minnesota Public Radio
Sleep Number
Ecolab
Deluxe Corporation
KTMY-FM / myTalk 107.1
U.S. Bank
Greater Minneapolis Hotel Association
NBC Sports Next
Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School and Foundation
Emerson's LGBTQ+Allies Employee Resource Group
Pizza Luce
American Academy of Neurology
IKEA Minneapolis
Pentair
Xcel Energy
UnitedHealth Group
Metro Meals on Wheels
McKinsey & Company
Ameriprise Financial, Inc.
C.H. Robinson
Deloitte
Gay 90s
Metro Transit
CenterPoint Energy
MFD Local 82

Photo courtesy of BigStock/Iryna Imago

LAVENDER'S
FIRST THURSDAYS

Buy A Drink.
Make A Connection.
Have Fun.

Join Lavender and our host partners, Ma'am and Quorum

THURSDAY
July 6 • 5:30 - 8:00 PM

ROCK ELM

Rock Elm Tavern
1665 County Road 24 • Plymouth

PRESENTED BY:

entertaining you!
Chanhassen
DINNER THEATRES

TWIN CITIES
LGBTQ+ HAPPY HOUR

COME AS YOU ARE
NO DRESS CODE
Enjoy complimentary light appetizers, drink specials, and a chance to register to win great prizes!

Register for FREE at LavenderMedia.eventbrite.com or just show up.

LAVENDER
$44.99
FOR 26
ISSUES

FREE SUBSCRIPTION
YOU PAY ONLY FOR POSTAGE
LAVENDERMAGAZINE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

At CHS, we're committed to fostering a culture where everyone is welcomed. Find your next career in agriculture. **jobs.chsinc.com**

Andi Otto. Photo by Brooke Ross

Twin Cities Pride's Executive Director Andi Otto

BY RANDY STERN

Andi Otto was primed for the position of Executive Director. His vision for Twin Cities Pride is an ambitious and grand one.

Some have said that it was about time that the festival expanded its footprint beyond the crowded Loring Park. It was also said that our main Pride celebration needed to be reflective of a wider community within the LGBTQ+ spectrum.

Otto's vision is wide and clear, and has been for 16 years, since joining Twin Cities Pride. Along this path, he became their Volunteer Coordinator. And, now, Otto is in the driver's seat and has already made his mark on the region's largest Pride celebration.

Who is Andi Otto? As he described himself, "I'm a parent of two beautiful children. I've been married to my partner, Dana, for eight years. We've been together for 15." Moreover, Otto also described his household as a "hockey family." And, one that is full of pets. "We have three dogs, a cat, two rabbits, two Guinea pigs, a hamster and a fish," said Otto.

While spending time driving Twin Cities Pride, Otto would say that he lives a normal family life. Yet, his background also helped to frame the current trajectory of Twin Cities Pride, such as his stints in retail and in employment recruitment.

Through the 16 years leading to his ascension as Executive Director, Otto can state that he has the experience towards creating a better Pride for us. Otto has worked security, the parade, and organizing volunteers to handle everything from pre-Pride events to keeping the parade flowing down Hennepin Avenue.

Now, it is all change at Twin Cities Pride. Perhaps, a change in a more positive direction. As Otto admits, "We haven't always done things right. As an organization, we've screwed up. I don't know of any organization that hasn't screwed up in the past."

How will Twin Cities Pride correct themselves? "One of the things that I wanted to make sure that I did when I came on as Executive Director is to make sure that every single voice was heard in our community," explained Otto. "They needed to be heard. We haven't always done a good job at that, and we've made mistakes."

Otto also has a plan towards organizational correction for Twin Cities Pride, and it is already in motion. "There were three things I wanted to do," explained Otto. "The first one is make sure that every single person that comes to Pride feels welcome. It does not matter which part of our community you are, where you come from, what your background is, anything like that. I want you to feel like walking into the park during the festival is like home and you feel safe, and you feel welcome, and you find the resources that you need and have a little fun by doing that."

"The second thing I wanted to do is I'm a big advocate of two heads are better than one," Otto continued. "Four heads are better than two. So, I wanted to make sure that with the other community leaders that we started working together, because that's how we make a difference. I can't do it alone. They can't do it alone. But together, we can make a really big impact and support our community in ways that is one, needed and two, that we've never done before, so that was important to me."

Lastly, "Pride has been known as this celebration in June and that's it," Otto explained, "but we are so much more than that. We are Pride 365 days a year. So, I launched programming that will happen 365 days a year because that's what Pride is. Pride isn't just a month. Pride isn't just a weekend. It is about living our life the most authentically that we can, 365 days a year."

This is more than just a grand plan to make Twin Cities Pride an improved experience and vital resource for the LGBTQ+ Community in the Twin Cities and across the Upper Midwest. Otto is serious about doing more than just putting on an event every year. This includes ensuring that LGBTQ+ youth are protected, all communities are welcome regardless of identity, and to connect with every organization across the region – including small town Pride celebrations and their organizers.

"We're this big Pride," Otto explains. "We're huge, but these little Prides have so much to offer. If I can help them in any way, I'm going to do it. We meet once a month as a group to help each other out like, 'Hey, I'm struggling to find entertainment,' or 'Hey, how do I deal with protestors?' or 'I'm struggling to find sponsors,' or 'I have this expense,' and so it was important for me to create this group to say, 'How can we help each other? How can we help grow? How can we boost each other?' So, this year, you'll see some things differently. These amazing human beings and some of them in not very welcoming cities, right? We look at Wright County this year, that's going to be a tough Pride for them. I will be there every single day to support them because they deserve it."

In the past, Twin Cities Pride would have a booth for small town Prides to table at Loring Park. Only a few would utilize this booth. Under Otto's leadership, expect to see a banner listing all of the small town Pride celebrations across the region, including dates, locations, and sponsors. Moreover, Otto wants Twin Cities Pride to actively support these small Pride celebrations. "I'm tired of the thought process of competing," said Otto. "It's not about competing. I don't want to compete." Furthermore, "Prides are amazing," continued Otto. "I got such amazing human beings running these Prides." ▮

For more on this story, please log on to www.lavendermagazine.com

Serving on the Frontlines
Insights on Federal Deployments and the Evolution of the Minnesota National Guard

BY JEN PEEPLES

The Minnesota National Guard has a rich history of federal deployments, with soldiers serving on the frontlines in various capacities. One individual who has firsthand experience in this realm is Army Lieutenant Colonel David Johansson, the full-time staff officer-in-charge of the 347th Regional Support Group (RSG). Having served on four deployments, including a recent mission in the Middle East, Lt. Col. Johansson offers a unique perspective on both his personal experiences and the broader picture of Guard deployments. In this interview, we delve into the challenges and changes in the Minnesota National Guard's deployments over the years and explore the key roles they play in finance and human resources.

As the staff officer-in-charge (OIC) of the 347th RSG, Lt. Col. Johansson bears significant responsibilities in coordinating deployments for units such as finance and human resource companies. The main challenges he faces in this role include ensuring efficient communication and coordination among different units, managing logistics and resources, and prioritizing the well-being of service members. Lt. Col. Johansson emphasizes the importance of thorough planning, adaptability, and collaboration to overcome these challenges and ensure successful deployments.

Over the years, deployments of the Minnesota National Guard have undergone notable changes in terms of their frequency, duration, and locations. Lt. Col. Johansson highlights a shift towards more diverse and frequent deployments, with soldiers spending an average of six to twelve months on the ground. Additionally, he notes that deployments now involve a mix of active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel, showcasing the Total Army concept. While deployments have become more demanding, the Minnesota National Guard has risen to the occasion, adapting its strategies and leveraging the unique strengths of each component.

The Minnesota National Guard plays vital roles in finance and human resources during federal deployments. Lt. Col. Johansson emphasizes that finance units ensure smooth financial operations, including managing pay, contracts, and budgetary matters. Meanwhile, human resource companies are responsible for personnel administration, ensuring the welfare, and handling administrative processes. Their contributions are crucial for maintaining the overall effectiveness and morale of deployed units.

During Lt. Col. Johansson's recent deployment to the Middle East, his unit undertook various notable missions and faced unique challenges. These missions ranged from supporting combined joint task forces to providing critical logistical support in challenging environments. Challenges included adapting to unfamiliar terrain and cultures, managing limited resources, and ensuring the safety and security of personnel. Lt. Col. Johansson highlights the resilience and adaptability of his unit in successfully executing these tasks, showcasing the professionalism and dedication of the Minnesota National Guard.

The Minnesota National Guard places great importance on preparing its personnel for deployments. Lt. Col. Johansson discusses the comprehensive training programs in place that simulate real-world scenarios, ensuring soldiers are ready to face the challenges they may encounter. Additionally, robust support systems are available to assist service members and their families throughout the deployment cycle. From pre-deployment briefings to family readiness programs, the Guard strives to provide the necessary resources and support networks to enhance the overall well-being of its personnel.

Lieutenant Colonel David Johansson's experiences as a staff officer-in-charge in the 347th Regional Support Group and his personal deployments with the Minnesota National Guard offer valuable insights into the world of federal deployments. From the evolving nature of deployments

Photo courtesy of Major Jackie Stenger

Continued on page 49

The Mother Of Pride, Marsha P. Johnson

BY SUSAN SWAVELY

CONTENT WARNING: This article references sexual assault, forced sex work, and death/murder. Since it was used as a self-identifier, it also uses the term transvestite.

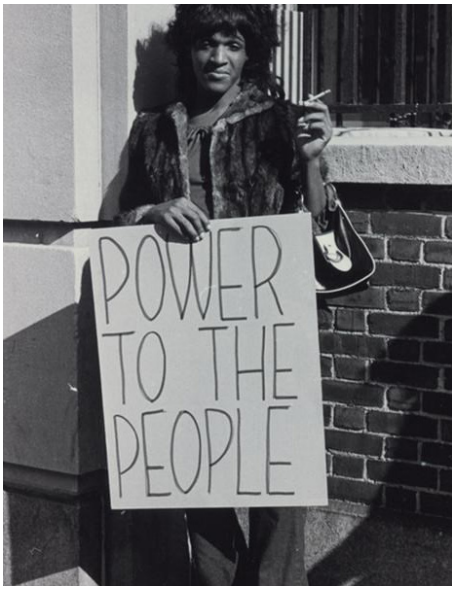


Photo courtesy of The New York Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division

Most people in the LGBTQ+ community are familiar with the phrase "the first pride was a riot" and with the name Marsha P. Johnson, but the extent of her influence and revolutionary contributions to the queer community goes largely unnoticed and unrecognized, even today. Learning about the incredible life of love and hardship, of generosity and joy and sorrow unveils so much about the lives of queer people, specifically transwomen, during a time before any kind of protection against discrimination or hate crimes targeted at the LGBTQ+ community in the United States.

Johnson was born in 1945, the fifth child of seven, and always felt most comfortable in girls' clothing. She started wearing girl's clothes from the time she was only five, despite growing up with a very religious family. Even as a child, Johnson faced horrifying treatment for her gender—she was sexually assaulted by a thirteen-year-old boy as a child, and began hiding her identity again until graduating high school. After high school, she took herself, a bag of clothes and fifteen dollars, and moved to New York City, on a search for a more accepting community.

In New York City, Johnson found it easier to wear the clothes she wanted to. She usually wore brightly colored thrifted dresses and outfits, as well as bright wigs and flower crowns she made herself. After her move to New York, she began calling herself by her new name, Marsha P. Johnson. She said that the P stood for "Pay it no mind," which was her life motto and her response when asked about her gender. During the fifties, the word transgender was not in use, so Johnson described herself as a transvestite, gay, and a drag queen, and used she/her pronouns.

Johnson made her living in New York waiting tables and performing drag, but mostly through what some historians call "survival sex," or sex work used only as a means to secure food, money, or a place to sleep. Johnson spent most of her life unhoused, staying with friends, in hotels, or even movie theatres. Marsha P. Johnson was not known for her hardships, though. She was so much more than the horrible things she endured. She was a vibrant woman with a warm, generous spirit. In fact, according to an article by Women & The American Story called "Life Story: Marsha P. Johnson," "Throughout Greenwich Village, she was known as 'Saint Marsha.' Locals admired her ability to truly be herself. Marsha had a reputation for being generous and kind. She gave people clothes and food, even though she had little of her own."

Upon moving to NYC, Johnson also met her lifelong best friend, another transwoman, named Sylvia Rivera, who was six years younger than the then seventeen-year-old Johnson. Johnson taught Rivera how to do her makeup and always encouraged her to love herself and her identity. The two were also together the night that the Stonewall Riots began on June 28th, 1969—which is largely credited to Johnson. While stories differ from source to source, many agree that Johnson threw a shot glass at a mirror, urging queer people at the Stonewall Inn to fight back against the police raid that was already happening that night.

Johnson's story only began here, though. From that point on in her life, Johnson was known to some as a hero and the leader of the first gay pride revolution, and as a danger to society by others, who were spinning an anti-gay narrative. Johnson stood proudly for her beliefs, though, and said, "Darling, I want my gay rights now. I think it's about time the gay brothers and sisters got their rights… especially the women." She and Rivera worked to form STAR, which was formed as a safe place for trans people, especially people of color, to find refuge from a hugely unsupportive world. The operation began in what the women thought was an abandoned truck, but when the pair later found out (as it was moving) that the truck was actually not abandoned, they moved to a building without electricity or running water.

Johnson and Rivera supported their trans children and paid their rent with sex work, and always managed to keep breakfast on the table. Johnson said about her work, "I'll always be known [for] reaching out to young people who have no one to help them out, so I help them out with a place to stay or some food to eat or some change for their pocket. And they never forget it. A lot of times I've reached my hand out to people in the gay community that just didn't have nobody to help them when they were down and out." And she's right, her legacy is one of love and incomprehensible generosity.

According to "Life Story, Marsha P. Johnson," "Despite her popularity, Marsha also lived a life of poverty and danger. She was arrested over 100 times. She believed no one should hustle [be forced to engage in sex work or survival sex] or live on the streets, but she knew no other way to survive." Johnson contracted HIV, and spoke out about the importance of not fearing people who were HIV positive, or treating them any differently.

Johnson even faced discrimination by her own community, which was at the time led mostly by white gay men and lesbians who did not want to include gender diversity and people of color in the movement, even though it was started by trans women of color. In fact, the 1973 Pride march in New York City banned drag queens from participating, including Johnson and Rivera, saying that drag was "giving them a bad name." Instead of accepting defeat from her own community, Johnson marched ahead of the parade with Rivera to prove how brave and revolutionary she really was.

Johnson's story doesn't end as it should have—with her exalted to stardom and living a life of peace during her lifetime. Her body was found in July of 1992, floating in the Hudson River, with a large wound on the back of her head. The authorities ruled it a suicide, but her friends and fellow transwomen of color knew that she was not suicidal, and that this looked much more like a murder. It was not until recently that the case was reopened, and it still remains unsolved.

It's hard to fathom that Johnson was so radiant and giving, especially since she had to fight at every turn, and lived a very hard life. But she was—this kindness is what will always survive her, what will always be felt with every photograph of her, ever mention of her name. What a beautiful legacy to leave behind, love. As a community, we owe so much of our freedom to the courage of a young Black transwoman, Marsha P. Johnson, and her resilience and bravery. Let us never—not ever, ever, ever—forget the incredible life of Marsha Pay It No Mind Johnson, may she rest in peace always. ▮

to the crucial roles played by finance and human resources units, Lt. Col. Johansson's perspective sheds light on the dedication and professionalism of the Minnesota National Guard. Their commitment to preparedness, effective coordination, and robust support systems ensures the successful execution of missions and the well-being of service members and their families.

In recent years, the Minnesota National Guard has faced evolving challenges and opportunities in their federal deployments. The frequency, duration, and locations of deployments have seen notable changes. Soldiers now spend an average of six to twelve months on the ground, engaging in diverse missions. This shift reflects the Guard's commitment to the Total Army concept, with active duty, National Guard, and reserve personnel working together seamlessly.

As the staff officer-in-charge of the 347th RSG, Lt. Col. Johansson plays a pivotal role in coordinating deployments for finance and human resource units. This responsibility comes with challenges, such as ensuring effective communication and coordination among different units, managing logistics and resources, and prioritizing the well-being of service members. Lt. Col. Johansson emphasizes the importance of thorough planning, adaptability, and collaboration in overcoming these challenges and ensuring successful deployments.

The Minnesota National Guard's finance and human resource units have significant roles during federal deployments. Finance units are responsible for managing pay, contracts, and budgetary matters, ensuring smooth financial operations. On the other hand, human resource companies handle personnel administration, ensuring the welfare of service members and managing administrative processes. Their contributions are essential in maintaining the overall effectiveness and morale of deployed units.

During Lt. Col. Johansson's recent deployment to the Middle East, his unit engaged in various notable missions that tested their skills and resilience. These missions included supporting combined joint task forces and providing critical logistical support in challenging environments. Adapting to unfamiliar terrain and cultures, managing limited resources, and ensuring the safety and security of personnel were among the challenges faced by Lt. Col. Johansson's unit. Through their professionalism and dedication, they successfully executed these tasks, reflecting the Minnesota National Guard's commitment to excellence.

To ensure preparedness, the Minnesota National Guard implements comprehensive training programs for its personnel. Lt. Col. Johansson discusses how these programs simulate real-world scenarios, equipping soldiers with the skills and knowledge needed to face the challenges of deployments. Furthermore, robust support systems are in place to assist service members and their families throughout the deployment cycle. Pre-deployment briefings, family readiness programs, and access to support networks contribute to the overall well-being of personnel.

In conclusion, Lt. Col. Johansson's experiences and insights shed light on the challenges and changes in the Minnesota National Guard's federal deployments. From the evolving nature of deployments to the crucial roles played by finance and human resources units, his perspective highlights the dedication and professionalism of the Guard. The Minnesota National Guard's commitment to preparedness, effective coordination, and robust support systems ensures the successful execution of missions and the well-being of service members and their families. As they continue to adapt and overcome challenges, the Minnesota National Guard remains a steadfast force, ready to serve on the frontlines in defense of the nation. ▮

Boston Scientific
Advancing science for life™

When we challenge discrimination, **we advance** equity in healthcare and our communities.

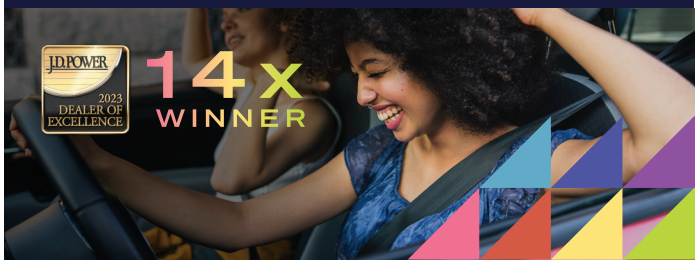
Discover our career opportunities at **https://tinyurl.com/BSC-Diversity**

Boston Scientific is an Equal Opportunity Employer – Race/Color/Religion/Sex/Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity/National Origin/Disability/Veteran. Copyright © 2023 by Boston Scientific Corporation or its affiliates. All rights reserved.

MORRIE'S
Minnetonka Subaru / Brooklyn Park Subaru

Moving Life Forward®

We're your automotive advocate – whether you're buying, selling, or servicing your vehicle.



ASTON MARTIN · Audi · BENTLEY · CADILLAC · CHEVROLET · CHRYSLER · DODGE · Ford · HONDA · HYUNDAI · JAGUAR · LAND ROVER · Jeep · KIA · LINCOLN · Maserati · MAZDA · RAM · SUBARU

Schedule a Test Drive at **Morries.com**

Pioneering Leadership
An Exclusive Interview with Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson

BY JEN PEEPLES

In a groundbreaking and historic move, the Minnesota National Guard appointed its first-ever Air Guard Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL). This trailblazing position represents a significant milestone for the Minnesota National Guard and the broader military community. We had the privilege of sitting down with Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson, the inaugural CSEL, to discuss her journey, responsibilities, challenges, and aspirations for the future. With over 34 years of service and a wealth of experience, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson offers valuable insights into her role and the impact she strives to make as a leader and advocate for enlisted service members.

Holding a Historic Position

As the first Air Guard Command Senior Enlisted Leader in the history of the Minnesota National Guard, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson describes the honor and pride she feels in serving in this groundbreaking role. Being at the forefront of change and progress is both humbling and inspiring, as she recognizes the significance of her position in breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations.

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson's journey in the military began in 1988 when she joined the Air Force as a jet engine mechanic. From the start, she defied traditional gender roles and embraced her passion for service. Her dedication and commitment to excellence allowed her to rise through the ranks and transition to the Air National Guard, where she held various positions, including personnelist, training manager, systems manager, and recruiter. Each role added to her skill set, providing her with a comprehensive understanding of the needs and challenges faced by enlisted service members.

Responsibilities of a CSEL

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson emphasizes the primary responsibilities of her role as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the Minnesota National Guard. As a liaison between the enlisted personnel and the command, she acts as their voice, ensuring that their concerns, needs, and aspirations are brought to the attention of the Guard's adjutant general. This involves maintaining open lines of communication, facilitating meetings, and advocating for policies and initiatives that support the well-being and professional development of enlisted members.

In her role as an advisor to the adjutant general, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson recognizes the importance of providing guidance and support to the command. By engaging in open and candid conversations with enlisted members during unit visits and town hall meetings, she bridges the gap between the command and the enlisted personnel. Her aim is to ensure that the commander's directives and intentions are effectively communicated, while also conveying the perspectives, views, and concerns of the enlisted service members.

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson discusses the challenges and strategies involved in effectively communicating the commander's directives while representing the views and concerns of enlisted service members. She highlights the significance of personal engagement, such as conducting town halls, symposiums, and one-on-one discussions, to foster candid conversations. By actively listening and being accessible, she creates an environment where enlisted members feel heard, respected, and valued.

As the senior representative for enlisted members in the Minnesota National Guard, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson reflects on the challenges and rewards of her role. She acknowledges the vastness of the organization, with nearly 13,000 citizen Soldiers and Airmen under her purview, making it physically impossible to be present for every service member. However, she finds immense reward in witnessing soldiers and airmen thrive in their roles and achieve personal and professional growth. The opportunity to engage with individuals during visits and experience their dedication firsthand is deeply fulfilling.

Memorable Moments

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson shares some of the most memorable and rewarding moments she has experienced throughout her 34-year career. From serving overseas to traveling internationally, she cherishes the growth and unique experiences the military has offered her. Above all, she highlights the pride she feels in watching her oldest son follow in her footsteps by enlisting in the Air National Guard, demonstrating the impact her own journey has had on her family.

Photos courtesy of Major Jackie Stenger

Inspiring Women in the Military

As a trailblazer for women in her position, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson talks about how she inspires and supports other women who aspire to pursue careers in the military. Through open conversations, shared experiences, mentorship, and networking opportunities, she strives to empower women and encourage them to overcome any obstacles they may face. She firmly believes in the power of representation and the importance of supporting and uplifting one another.

Initiatives and Programs for Enlisted Members

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson discusses the initiatives and programs she has implemented or supported to enhance the well-being and professional development of enlisted members in the Minnesota National Guard. She highlights the importance of mental health support, career advancement opportunities, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. By investing in the personal and professional growth of enlisted members, she aims to create a resilient and highly skilled force.

Fostering Camaraderie and Teamwork

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson emphasizes the significance of fostering a sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the nearly 13,000 citizen Soldiers and Airmen in the Minnesota National Guard. Through team-building exercises, shared experiences, and promoting a culture of inclusivity and mutual support, she aims to create a cohesive and resilient force. Building strong relationships and fostering a sense of belonging contributes to the overall effectiveness and readiness of the Guard.

Advice for Young Enlisted Members

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson offers valuable advice for young enlisted members who are starting their military careers and looking to succeed and progress within the organization. She emphasizes the importance of dedication, continuous learning, seeking mentorship, and embracing opportunities for personal and professional growth. By staying committed to their goals, cultivating a strong work ethic, and leveraging the resources available to them, young enlisted members can thrive and achieve their aspirations.

As the CSEL, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson explains how she ensures that the concerns and needs of enlisted service members are effectively addressed and taken into consideration. She stresses the significance of maintaining open lines of communication, actively seeking feedback, and advocating for policies and initiatives that directly impact enlisted members' well-being and professional development. By being their voice and ensuring their concerns are heard, she aims to create a positive and supportive environment for all enlisted personnel.

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson reflects on how the role of the Command Senior Enlisted Leader has evolved over the years. She discusses the changes she has witnessed during her tenure, including an increased emphasis on the voice and representation of enlisted service members, as well as a growing recognition of the importance of their perspectives in shaping organizational policies and decisions. The evolving role has allowed for greater collaboration and understanding between the command and enlisted personnel.

Unique Challenges and Opportunities for the Minnesota National Guard

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson highlights some of the unique challenges and opportunities that the Minnesota National Guard faces compared to other state National Guard units. Given Minnesota's diverse terrain, extreme weather conditions, and its role in providing support during natural disasters, the Guard must adapt and be prepared for a wide range of missions. This unique environment presents opportunities for training, innovation, and developing specialized skills that are invaluable in serving the state and the nation.

Looking ahead, Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson shares her goals and aspirations for the future of the Minnesota National Guard. She is committed to further enhancing the well-being and professional development of enlisted members, advocating for policies and initiatives that prioritize their needs. She aims to continue fostering a culture of inclusivity, diversity, and mutual support, ensuring that every service member feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. By contributing to the continued success of the Minnesota National Guard, she hopes to leave a lasting legacy that inspires future generations of leaders.

Chief Master Sergeant Lisa Erikson's appointment as the first Air Guard Command Senior Enlisted Leader of the Minnesota National Guard signifies a remarkable achievement and opens doors for future leaders. Her dedication, experience, and advocacy for enlisted service members make her an invaluable asset to the military community. With Chief Master Sergeant Erikson at the helm, the Minnesota National Guard is poised for continued success and progress in supporting its enlisted personnel, safeguarding the state, and serving the nation. ∎

Gay Softball World Series/Twins hat photo courtesy of the Minnesota Twins

Big Time Goodtime

The Gay Softball World Series Proves That The Best Way To Get Is To Give

BY TERRANCE GRIEP

They were the first Major League Baseball franchise to record three million paying attendees in one season. They were the North Star State's first Major League Baseball franchise before that, of course…and, this August, the Minnesota Twins will add another vibrant first to their pioneering history: they will become the first Major League Baseball team to co-sponsor the Gay Softball World Series, said Series taking place in the Cities from which the Twins take their names.

The Gay Softball World Series is pretty much what it sounds like. Its boosters swear it's "the largest annual LGBTQ single-sport, week-long athletic competition globally." The GSWS is presented by the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance which also is pretty much what it sounds like–that is, according to its website, NAGAAA is "a nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of amateur sports competition, particularly softball, for all persons regardless of age, sexual orientation or preference – with special emphasis on the participation of members of the gay community – and to otherwise foster national and international sports competition by planning, promoting and carrying out amateur sports competition."

Taking place every year, the Gay Softball World Series is the throbbing heart of such amateur sports competition…but as to *where* that heart will throb, that's chiefly up to the taking place places. And, where the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance is concerned, there are taking place places a-plenty: beginning its 46th season, NAGAAA currently has 46 member leagues—that is, queer softball leagues in cities all around the upper half of the Western Hemisphere, from Atlanta to Vancouver and from Cincinnati to San Antonio.

Year after year, NAGAAA's member cities attempt to win the right to host the GSWS in a competition that's often fiercer than anything seen on the softball field. One reason any given community might covet such an event has less to do with hits and runs and more to do with dollars and cents. Before this year's bids began, the 2023 Gay Softball World Series was projected to attract to the host city 5,000 visitors, give or take a bat boy. These athlete/tourists would inject, so it was supposed, seven million smackers into the local economy before and after innings.

Photo courtesy of BigStock/Wolterk

This notion resonated with Sports Minneapolis (which is a division of Meet Minneapolis, an organization whose self-described work is "promoting Minneapolis and attracting visitors.") When the iconic Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League, one of NAGAAA's members, decided to try its hand at turning the ol' home field into a championship field, the two entities joined forces. Further abetted by numerous other local entities, they rallied around a butch bid lyrically entitled "Lighting Up The North."

The pitch evokes a powerful image, an easy one to aspire to and be inspired by and to rally around: solar radiation crashing into the planet's magnetic field, turning the night sky into a shimmering half-rainbow, gold crowding out green, green crowding out blue, and blue crowding out gold. Whether through poignant imagery or the sheer politeness of the presentation, the bid succeeded…but the lights produced by a Twin Cities-based Gay Softball World Series might well be of a more abstract variety.

When it's played between August 28 and September 2 of this year, the Gay Softball World Series will be comprised of 900 games contested in sports complexes all around the metro area, including Burnsville, Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, and South Saint Paul. That number of games is necessary because NAGAAA recognizes seven divisions of play ranging from the Type A A-rank to the downright-sanguine E-rank, as well as two oh-what's-the-hurry-second-base-isn't-going-anywhere 50-and-older Masters divisions. Each of these contests will be complemented by an opening ceremony, a NAGAAA Hall of Fame induction, a charity night, and a closing ceremony.

This number of softball games requires local patronage, and the Twin Cities have come through big time. Sponsors of "Light Up The North" include Mason Jar Kitchen & Bar, Modist Brewing Company, Morrie's Auto Group, Purpose Restaurants, Q Care Plus, Quorum ("Minnesota's LGBTQ+ and Allied Chamber of Commerce"), Roxy's Cabaret, the Saloon MN, the aforementioned Sports Minneapolis, and…annnd…well, how 'bout that..?

…and the Minnesota Twins.

Tuesday, August 29, 2023, will be Light Up The North Night at Target Field when the Minnesota Twins will take on the Cleveland Guardians. A special ticket package includes admission, of course, along with a co-branded Gay Softball World Series/Minnesota Twins hat. A portion of each package purchased will benefit the Twin Cities Gay Softball World Series organization because a World Series, whether it's amateur or professional, softball or baseball, doesn't grow on trees.

The Twins' commitment to the GSWS goes beyond a single themed night. In fact, when the bid for the 2023 Gay Softball World Series was won, then-Minnesota Twins Senior Director of Diversity and Inclusion Miguel Ramos was there. "We're a vibrant and diverse community that celebrates how sports brings communities together," he said in a press release announcing the victorious bid.

It's that vibrancy that'll matter most during the 2023 Gay Softball World Series, of course, that vibrancy that Lights Up The North—spectacular lights, generated not from glimmering cosmic forces, but by the people making it all happen. The players and the coaches and the umpires will be the most obvious lights, but the people watching and cheering and vending and visiting and sponsoring and volunteering—well, they'll be shining, as well. Volunteers might well the be the brightest sparkles, and volunteers can do their thing via the website below.

Ultimately, the 2023 GSWS will be about the local professional team syncing its vibrancy with that of its local amateur counterpart…and having a little fun while doing it. "We are committed to cultivating a culture of sportsmanship and supporting the LGBTQ+ community," the website of the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League declares. "The G stands for 'goodtime!'" ▮

LIGHT UP THE NORTH

www.lightupthenorth.org

www.lightupthenorth.org/volunteer

Photo courtesy of BigStock/kmpzzz

Finding Peace Through the Noise, How Hennepin County Helps LGBTQ+ Community With Mental Health

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

The LGBTQ+ community struggles to attain the mental health care and treatment they need and deserve. With a startling number of anti-trans and anti-LGBTQ+ legislation introduced into the United States this year, uneasiness stirs in our community, but there are methods we can utilize to mitigate fear and stand up for one another and our collective mental health. *Lavender Magazine* spoke with Jocelyn McQuirter, project manager of Behavioral Health in Hennepin County, and EJ Dean, the project manager at Behavioral Health.

Why Do We Need Heightened Mental Health Care?

According to data collection compiled by the Trevor Project suggested, 45% of LGBTQ+ youth thought about attempting suicide. Out of that percentage, one in five transgender or non-binary youth attempted suicide, with a larger number of affected individuals being people of color.

In addition to that startling fact, 60% of LGBTQ+ youth that wanted to seek out mental health care and help were not able to find the resources to help them.

"Historically, LGBTQIA2S+ communities have not been considered priority populations at all levels of government. We're committed to turning that around through improved data collection, strengthening partnerships, and continuing to broaden our network of culturally specific providers. We're partnering with providers that are culturally responsive and prepared to support the LGBTQIA2s+ community. Data is limited, and we still have a large gap in fully establishing the comprehensive needs for the LGBTQIA2s+ community in Hennepin County," Dean said.

Another asset affecting the lack of mental health care for the LGBTQ+ community is the uptick of anti-trans legislation set into motion this year. Halfway through the year, 549 anti-trans bills have passed in the United States. Eleven of the 549 are in our own Minnesota. However, in our community, hope is never lost.

"Amid anti-trans bills across the nation, Minnesota recently was declared a Safe Haven state. Anecdotally, we're hearing about people fleeing other states and choosing Minnesota and the Twin Cities, particularly as a more welcoming place to live. Hennepin County has done great work to become an inclusive employer, and we have every intention of being a leader in accessible and inclusive LGBTQIA2s+ behavioral health," Dean shared.

How Has the Pandemic Affected the Mental Health Crisis?

"Mental health has an impact on nearly every facet of well-being and is impacted by our individual experiences and access to basic needs, much less healing. A 2021 KFF report shared that: pre-pandemic experiences with stigma and discrimination that LGBTQI2S+ experience may have increased the vulnerability to stress during the pandemic," Dean reported.

"Historically, the LGBT+ community has faced mental health and substance use problems at higher rates than their non-LGBT+ peers."

Dean explained that one part of this disparity concerns unequal pay ranges between the LGBTQ+ and the non-LGBTQ+ population. Unbalanced economic disbursement can harm mental health, especially when disruptions arise, including financial blocks and a shortage of culturally responsive providers.

"There's been a quadrupling of anxiety and depression since COVID-19, among other stressors," McQuirter added.

How Can The Behavioral Services Department Help the LGBTQ+ Community?

Dean says the Hennepin County Adult Mental Health Initiative strives to " increase culturally specific services and provide supports to improve cultural responsiveness across contracted services" to avoid feelings of neglect and lack of care. To ensure this method reaches the community, providers understand and reflect mental health struggles as they pertain to the LGBTQ+ community. The training in motion is called "De-Escalation Training from a Holistic, Multicultural, Self-Aware Perspective," which features a psychotherapist who knows the ins and outs of "complex identity work." The seminar holds three-day trainings for over

100 providers and 11 agencies, furthering the main message of Hennepin County's Adult Mental Health Initiative: to broaden services and reach.

'See Mental Health' Awareness Campaign

Hennepin County's campaign yearns to end stigma when discussing mental health struggles and navigate discourse with empathy and honesty. To do this, Hennepin County established the year-long campaign, 'See Mental Health.'

"This campaign is about community and driving the value of connection as ways to tell residents: You're not alone. The effort intends to reach youth, veterans, seniors, and communities of color through a variety of multimedia channels," McQuirter beamed.

This campaign dives deeper into mental health care than traditional ideas of therapy and discussion about mental health.

"We see this campaign as an opportunity to build meaningful connections and illuminate ways people can find forward with their mental health," McQuirter continued.

How Can the LGBTQ+ Community Find the Care They Need?

Seeking care for mental health is not a one-size fits all how-to guide. Rather, individuals must assess their specific needs and set forth their intentions during their research. However, the quest to attain the correct care should not be a discouraging thought but a hopeful notion.

"We recognize that the LGBTQIA2s+ community is intersectional in demographics and needs, so no one person has the same needs as another. We also recognize our community faces significant worker shortages and barriers to licensure that get in the way of accessing culturally responsive providers," Dean continued. "We're gathering input at the county level, where we see providers who are specialized to meet needs. We're seeing more and more agencies that implemented training and processes to both collect data and support strong referrals to culturally responsive partners."

According to Dean, The National Association of Counties (NACo) chose Hennepin County Human Services as the 2023 recipient of a prestigious award. Since the county invested almost $1 million dollars with a mental health focus, Hennepin County now serves as a model and example for a progressive method to steer around the difficulties and transgressions associated with mental health treatment in the LGBTQ+ community.

Coping Skills

Finding your community first.

"If you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two-spirit or any other expansive sexual or gender identity: Find your people, connect and reach out," Dean said.

Dedicate a few minutes each day to check in with yourself and your mental health. Select a few self-care activities to clear your head and increase your serotonin.

This next tip applies to the LGBTQ+ community and allies alike. Save social media for those who you want to be social with. If a certain page causes you anxiety or fear, don't follow that page. Clean up your followers and those you follow to those who respect your identity and personhood. Only focus on those who attribute positivity to your life. Life is too short to invite negative bombardments to your handheld device.

"Know that many people across the nation are working to prevent these harmful bills from passing and to build an inclusive infrastructure," Dean vocalized.

For allies, stand up for the communities surrounding you. Even if you don't identify with the LGBTQ+ community, you can stand in solidarity with them. Support your friends and family, increase your awareness through reading and research, and stay educated on current events affecting the community.

Employers have a responsibility to uphold as well. Show support to the community by opening up the discussion, indicating your place of employment doubles as a safe space, "show[ing] some love with a trans-inclusive pride flag, or by adding gender identity and chosen name fields to your forms. Start anywhere. It makes an impact," Dean said. ▮

Resources:

The Trevor Project www.thetrevorproject.org
The Trans Lifeline Hotline www.translifeline.org/hotline
Face to Face www.face2face.org
Neither Both www.neitherboth.com
OutfrontMN www.outfront.org
Gender Justice www.genderjustice.us
RECLAIM www.reclaim.care
Family Tree Clinic www.familytreeclinic.org
Rainbow Health www.rainbowhealth.org

See connection as a way forward.

See mental health .org

Together, we can find ways to support our mental wellness and bring hope to others.

Made possible by Hennepin County

Photos by Randy Stern

Jones-Harrison's Rainbow Connection Creates a Safe Haven for LGBTQ+ Elders

BY GABRIELLE REEDER

Six months ago, Jones-Harrison Senior Living Home cemented the Rainbow Connection program, a biweekly community group for queer adults. *Lavender Magazine* sat down with Heather M. Stimac, the Director of Therapeutic Recreation, Music Specialist, and Entertainment Coordinator of the living facility.

What is Rainbow Connection?

"As far as the Rainbow Connection, this is actually my baby and my very important, inclusive group. What we wanted to avoid was a support group. What we wanted was an all-inclusive group," Stimac explained that fostering anonymity and comfortability served as a driving force in the formation of the social hour.

According to Stimac, guests should feel comfortable during each meeting as members of the LGBTQ+ community or as allies in attendance.

The group meets every other Wednesday at 1:15 p.m. throughout the senior living quarters. One week, the group focuses on education, and the next, they move to education. Every decision within the Rainbow Connection functions under a voting platform.

Curriculum

Each social hour soiree begins with the designation of the rainbow friend of the week. Stimac selects the Rainbow Friend of the Week, bringing in a portrait of the notable individual along with their esteemed contributions to the community. Following the selection of the special guest comes the discussion portion of the meeting.

"I like to open it up to get their opinions and what they think or how their thoughts have changed or the members that do identify with the LGBT community what their experience was, which is very important because that's the best learning experience for the people who have questions or are there for education and understand that," she said.

Succeeding the discussion segment, the alliance speaks of various ways to show support to the LGBTQ+ community.

Weeks ago, the group learned about the history of the LGBTQ+ flag and its founder. By delving into the rich history of the colors of the flag, the group settled on a color to represent the Rainbow Connection.

"We designated what our color would be if we were, you know, thinking in terms of our life and what we want to represent. We kind of became a residential Jones-Harrison pride flag," Stimac beamed.

Rainbow Fun

Besides riveting discussions and poignant educational talks, Rainbow Connection doesn't stray away from fun-filled games and activities. For their social hours, members compete in Pride bingo nights, Pride trivia, and rainbow beanbag tosses to switch up the regularly scheduled events of the biweekly meetings.

Stimac suggests switching up the formula of the meetings allows Rainbow Connection to break away from the confines of the support group style and aim toward more of their mission of "a place of joy and togetherness."

The name encapsulates the message of the group. "How we connect with each other in the community in our community. And the residents can connect with people in their community. And so seniors in this environment can feel that support as well, that they're not alone, that they don't have to be afraid. Even if there are other people that judge them," Stimac continued. "The people in these rooms do not, and they do have friends that, whether they are LGBT community or not, they are welcoming. They are friendly. They want to know more. They have questions, and that understanding goes further when we have a group like this."

How Does Jones-Harrison Support the LGBTQ+ Community Outside of Rainbow Connection?

When Jones-Harrison opened its doors over 130 years ago, the facility doubled as a highly religious building. Stimac says that the ideology of ingrained religion affects many members today, making them frightened to seek out community from groups like the Rainbow Connection. However, that notion continues to change each day. With the likes of Stimac and her team, the staff, and community strive to create a welcoming, warm, safe environment for guests to reach the support and acceptance they crave and need to lead honest, productive lives.

"Jones-Harrison has always been a very inclusive environment. I'm actually very proud to work here. We try to represent a welcoming environment for the LGBT+ community, even visually, the front of our building; we have rainbow flags flying with our logo," Stimac said.

As visitors walk into the front of the building, the staff makes sure to set out LGBTQ+ literature, including *Lavender Magazine*, for members and visitors to peruse. The home shows LGBTQ+ cinema on movie nights and offers religious support by a queer chaplain, furthering the welcoming nature of the home.

Testimonials

Rainbow Connection succeeds in providing comfort to those in Jones-Harrison who haven't experienced this kind of connectedness to the LGBTQ+ community before. Stimac told us some of the testimonials that arose from the past six months.

"We've had a man who was 72 years old, and he gave me permission to share this; came out in that group as bisexual. He never told anybody except for his wife, and he came out to the community in that group," she remarked.

Two members of the LGBTQ+ community who live at Jones-Harrison warned Stimac of their fears before attending their first Rainbow Connection meeting. Both individuals thought the group would be a depressing, AA-style meeting, but they were pleased to learn the opposite after Stimac gave them a warm invite.

Many members joined Rainbow Connection after participating in the game days and learning about the low-stakes environment.

"It's really become the most special group, and I hear from residents all the time that it's the most unique, wonderful welcoming group, and they love attending, and that's for people who identify with the LGBT community and residents who are supporters of it. And that warms my heart," Stimac radiated. ∎

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Community Connection brings visibility to local LGBTQ-friendly non-profit organizations.
To reserve your listing in Community Connection, email advertising@lavendermagazine.com.

ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Foster Adopt Minnesota
Finding families and providing information, education, and support to Minnesota Adoptive, Foster and Kinship communities.
2446 University Ave. W., Ste. 104
St. Paul, MN 55114
(612) 861-7115, (866) 303-6276
info@fosteradoptmn.org
www.fosteradoptmn.org

ANIMAL RESCUE

Second Chance Animal Rescue
Dedicated to rescuing, fostering, caring for, and adopting out dogs and cats into forever homes.
P.O. Box 10533
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
(651) 771-5662
www.secondchancerescue.org

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

Quorum
Minnesota's LGBTQ+ and Allied Chamber of Commerce working to build, connect, and strengthen for a diverse business community.
2446 University Ave. W., Ste 112
St. Paul, MN 55114
(612) 460-8153
www.twincitiesquorum.com

CASINOS

Mystic Lake Casino Hotel
Nonstop gaming excitement with slots, blackjack, bingo and more plus distinctive bars and restaurants.
2400 Mystic Lake Blvd.
Prior Lake, MN 55372
(800) 262-7799
www.mysticlake.com

ENVIRONMENT

The Nature Conservancy
TNC is an environmental nonprofit working to create a world where people and nature thrive.
1101 W. River Pkwy., Ste. 200
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1291
(612) 331-0700
minnesota@tnc.org
www.nature.org/minnesota

EVENT VENUES

Landmark Center
A classic venue, with a grand cortile and beautiful courtrooms, accommodates celebrations of all sizes.
75 W. 5th St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 292-3228
www.landmarkcenter.org

GRANTMAKERS/FUNDERS

PFund Foundation
PFund is the LGBTQ+ community foundation that provides grants to students and grants to non-profits.
PO Box 3640
Minneapolis, MN 55403
612-870-1806
www.pfundfoundation.org

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Aliveness Project
Community Center for individuals living with HIV/AIDS – on-site meals, food shelf, and supportive service.
3808 Nicollet Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55102
(612) 824-LIFE (5433)
www.aliveness.org

Family Tree Clinic
We're a sliding fee sexual health clinic and education center, now in Minneapolis.
1919 Nicollet Ave.
Minneapolis MN 55403
(612) 473-0800
www.familytreeclinic.org

NAMI Minnesota
(National Alliance on Mental Illness)
Providing free classes and peer support groups for people affected by mental illnesses.
800 Transfer Rd. #31
St. Paul, MN 55114
(651) 645-2948
www.namihelps.org

Rainbow Health Minnesota
Meeting the health needs of LGBTQ+ people and those living with HIV with holistic service.
2700 Territorial Rd. W.
St. Paul, MN 55114
General: (612) 341-2060
MN AIDSLine: (612) 373-2437
www.rainbowhealth.org

Red Door Clinic
Sexual health care for all people. Get confidential tests & treatment in a safe, caring setting.
525 Portland Ave., 4th Fl.
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(612) 543-5555
reddoor@hennepin.us
www.reddoorclinic.org

LIBRARIES

Quatrefoil Library
Your LGBTQ+ library and community center. Free membership, events, and e-books/audiobooks. Check us out!
1220 E. Lake St.
Minneapolis, MN 55407
(612) 729-2543
www.qlibrary.org

MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

Radio K
Radio K is the award-winning student-run radio station of the University of Minnesota.
330 21st. Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 625-3500
www.radiok.org

MORTGAGE

Nonprofit Mortgage Company
Purchase, refinance, and home equity loans. I'll help you with every step of the process. NMLS 2259195 1608823. An Equal Housing Opportunity
Betsy Phillips @ 651-274-9367
www.LoansbyBetsy.com

MUSEUM

Minnesota Historical Society
Create your own adventure at MNHS historic sites and museums around Minnesota.
mnhs.org

The Bakken Museum
Exhibits and programs to inspire a passion for innovation through science, technology, and the humanities.
3537 Zenith Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55418
(612) 926-3878
www.thebakken.org

Walker Art Center
Showcasing the fresh, innovative art of today and tomorrow through exhibitions, performances, and film screenings.
725 Vineland Pl.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 375-7600
www.walkerart.org

PERFORMING ARTS

Chanhassen Dinner Theaters
The nation's largest professional dinner theater and Minnesota's own entertainment destination.
501 W. 78th St.
Chanhassen, MN 55317
(952) 934-1525
www.ChanhassenDT.com

Guthrie Theater
Open to the public year-round, the Guthrie produces classic and contemporary plays on three stages.
818 S. 2nd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(612) 377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

Lyric Arts Main Street Stage
Theater with character. Comedies, musicals, & dramas in a professional, intimate setting where all are welcomed.
420 E. Main St.
Anoka, MN 55303
(763) 422-1838
info@lyricarts.org
www.lyricarts.org

Minnesota Opera
World-class opera draws you into a synthesis of beauty; breathtaking music, stunning costumes & extraordinary sets. Performances at the Ordway Music Theater - 345 Washington St., St. Paul, MN 55102
(612) 333-6669
www.mnopera.org

Minnesota Orchestra
Led by Music Director Designate Thomas Søndergård, the Minnesota Orchestra, one of America's leading symphony orchestras.
1111 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 371-5656, (800) 292-4141
www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts
Leading performing arts center with two stages presenting Broadway musicals, concerts and educational programs that enrich diverse audiences.
345 Washington St.
St. Paul, MN 55102
(651) 224-4222
info@ordway.org
www.ordway.org

Twin Cities Gay Men's Chorus
An award-winning chorus building community through music and offers entertainment worth coming out for!
1430 W. 28th St., Ste. B
Minneapolis, MN 55408
(612) 339-SONG (7664)
chorus@tcgmc.org
www.tcgmc.org

RELIGIOUS & SPIRITUAL

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church
Everyone is welcome at Hennepin Church! Vibrant Worship. Authentic Community. Bold Outreach.
511 Groveland Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 871-5303
www.hennepinchurch.org

Plymouth Congregational Church
Many Hearts, One Song; Many Hands, One Church. Find us on Facebook and Twitter.
1900 Nicollet Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 871-7400
www.plymouth.org

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
An inclusive and affirming community transforming lives through God's love.
519 Oak Grove St.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 870-7800
www.ourcathedral.org

Westminster Presbyterian Church
An open and affirming congregation, welcoming persons of all sexual orientations, gender expressions and identities.
1200 Marquette Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55403
(612) 332-3421
www.westminstermpls.org

SENIOR LIVING

Friends & Co
Fostering meaningful connections for older adults for 50+ years. Offering quick drop-in chat line, phone & visiting companionship services.
2550 University Ave. W., Ste. 260-S
St. Paul, MN 55114
(612) 721-1400
www.friendsco.org

Senior Community Services
Providing non-medical services that meet the changing needs of older adults & support their caregivers.
10201 Wayzata Blvd., Ste. 335
Minnetonka, MN 55305
(952) 541-1019
www.seniorcommunity.org/lav

SOCIAL SERVICES

Lutheran Social Service of MN
Serving all Minnesotans with person-centered services that promote full and abundant lives.
lssmn.org | 612-642-5990 | 800-582-5260
Adoption & Foster Care | welcome@chlss.org
Behavioral Health | 612-879-5320
Host Homes | hosthomes@lssmn.org
Supported Decision-Making | 888-806-6844
Therapeutic Foster Care | 612-751-9395

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

Discover St. Louis Park
Minnesota's Sweet Spot! Visit us for exceptional dining, attractions, shopping, hotels and event space.
1660 Hwy 100 S., Ste. 501
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
(952) 426-4047
www.DiscoverStLouisPark.com

Discover Stillwater
Get away to Stillwater for delicious dining, fun shops, and unique nightlife in this charming rivertown!
info@DiscoverStillwater.com
www.DiscoverStillwater.com

Visit Greater St. Cloud
Give yourself a break. Visit Greater St. Cloud.
1411 W. St. Germain St., Ste. 104
St. Cloud, MN 56301
(320) 251-4170
info@visitstcloud.com
www.visitstcloud.com

YOUTH

The Bridge for Youth
Emergency shelter, crisis intervention, and resources for youth currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness.
1111 W. 22nd St.
Minneapolis, MN 55405
(612) 377-8800 or text (612) 400-7233
www.bridgeforyouth.org

AUTO REPAIR & SERVICE

Locally Owned & Operated Since 1950
HAGEN'S AUTO BODY
Estimates 7am-4:30pm • All Insurance Accepted
Lifetime Repair Warranty
28th & Lyndale Ave. S, Mpls • 612-872-6671
WWW.HAGENSAUTOBODY.COM

HOME SERVICES

MATT'S TREE SERVICE
CABLING, PRUNING, & REMOVALS
LICENSED AND INSURED
Residential & Commercial Services
ISA Certified Arborist on Staff
Tree Removal • Tree Trimming • Chipping • Stump Grinding
Storm Damage • Lot Clearing • Hedge & Shrub Pruning
Emerald Ash Borer, Dutch Elm Disease
and Oak Wilt protection treatments
25+ yrs. Experience
Credit Cards accepted
Office: 612-706-8210

REAL ESTATE

Josh Kelly
LGBTQIA+ Realtor®
612.219.2211
JoshKelly@edinarealty.com
JoshKelly.edinarealty.com
Edina Realty
a Berkshire Hathaway affiliate

EMPLOYMENT

Account Executive. Lavender Media is seeking to add a Twin Cities based full time Account Executive to our sales team. We are looking for an outgoing, organized, self-driven & motivated professional with excellent phone, writing and presentation skills. Candidates should enjoy working directly with clients who are interested in growing their business through Lavender advertising and event sponsorships. Candidates must be local. Includes base pay + commission and an employee benefits package that includes group health, dental, life insurance and LTD. Applicants should have experience with Mac software environment, Excel, Word, social media platforms & database software such as Filemaker Pro. They should exhibit an elevated level of organization, attention to detail, the ability to work as part of a team, effective communication, self direction, enjoys working with new people and has a natural drive to grow. Please send your cover letter and resume to stephen.rocheford@lavendermagazine.com

J.W. TREE & STUMP, LLC
Light Tree Removal, Trimming and Stump Grinding
715-716-6684
FULLY INSURED
Serving the North Metro, Duluth, and Surrounding Areas
Call Today for a Free Quote

COLDWELL BANKER REALTY
the NANCY WALKER TEAM
Live Well. Invest Wisely.
nwalker@cbrealty.com
612.827.9537
TheNancyWalkerTeam.com

GUN SHOPS

Bill's Gun Shop & Range
We're in This Together!
Training - Safety - Fun
billsgs.com
Robbinsdale - Circle Pines - Baxter - Hudson - Fargo

INSURANCE

State Farm®
Davina Baldwin
763.535.4788
davina@davinabaldwin.com
6262 Boone Ave. N.
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428
Davina M. Baldwin
AUTO | HOME | LIFE | HEALTH | BUSINESS
www.davinabaldwin.com

Advertise your business in
THE NETWORK
Call 612-436-4660

LAVENDER
$44.99 FOR 26 ISSUES
FREE SUBSCRIPTION
YOU PAY ONLY FOR POSTAGE
SUBSCRIBE ONLINE AT
LAVENDERMAGAZINE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

Photos by Randy Stern

The Electric Vehicle from Our Favorite Brand

BY RANDY STERN

You have seen the advertisements in this magazine. We have covered Subaru countless times. Yet, there are more stories to tell about one of our favorite brands.

Have you ever been to Luther Bloomington Subaru? They moved into their massive new facility behind their old store on Lyndale Avenue near American Boulevard. The space itself is much larger than the one they used to share with the Acura store. It is quite the elevated experience when you get there.

What drives this particuar dealer is what Subaru of America calls "The Love Promise". Every dealer must adhere to this as a way to engage owners and potential customers. This program includes efforts towards being environmentally responsible, a good pet lover, supporting education, and so forth. It is because of the Love Promise that Luther Bloomington Subaru supports our local LGBTQ+ community.

One prime example is their sponsorship of Stonewall Sports MSP's Pickleball group. This hot sport combined with an LGBTQ+-loving brand is really the perfect combination.

Another perfect combination that involves us is to feed our love of being on the edge of technology. That includes battery-electric vehicles.

The 2023 Solterra feeds into Subaru's Love Promise perfectly. It is a green vehicle that invites LGBTQ+ motorists to enjoy a fuel-free lifestyle.

Although Subaru sold hybrids and plug-in hybrids in the past, neither of them were available as new in our market. Therefore, this is the first electrified Subaru sold in Minnesota – and all other 49 states.

The Solterra is a smaller SUV that is driven by two electric motors running of a 72.8 kilowatt-hour battery. Subaru calls this StarDrive, which has an overall system rating of 215 horsepower and 249 pound-feet of torque. As expected from a Subaru, it has an EV version of the brand's Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive and X-Mode to enhance the system through rougher terrain and inclement situations.

Charging a Solterra can be done at a DC Fast Charging station. However, you can do so at home with a Level 2 charger. It will take between 9.5 to 11 hours to get back to a full battery level. Estimated range on the Solterra is 228 miles.

You may never see the StarDrive system, but you see a handsome exterior that about the same size as a Crosstrek. It is also very accommodating, with a 4-5 seat capacity that is roomy enough for adults, as well as Rainbow Families. It is also very comfortable, with supportive front seats and a lovely rear seat. The driver seat gets a 10-way power adjustment.

Behind the rear seats, there is 23.8 cubic feet of usable cargo space. Fold down the rear seats, and you get up to 63.5 cubic feet of pet space, if not your groceries or items for the Pride festival booth.

One might complain about the instrument panel and center console controls, but work with me here. It all works. The steering wheel may cut-off the instrument cluster screen for taller drivers, but the readouts are clean and easy to understand. The center stack is crowned by a wide 12.3-inch touchscreen with a navigation system included. You can connect with smartphone device wirelessly with superb integration. Our Limited model came with a Harman/Kardon Premium Audio System that includes 11 speakers positioned throughout the cabin.

It is the center console that will spark your attention. The shifter is a knob that requires depressing to engage Drive or Reverse. Park is a push button sitting on top of the piano black-finished console. You also have a set of buttons pertaining the drive system. Once you get the hang of everything, it is easy and logical to use. There is a hidden panel in the console that houses the wireless charging pad for your phone.

How does the Solterra drive? Very well, indeed! The ride quality is just smooth – even on rougher city streets. Handling is controlled and offers a lot of stability through evasive maneuvers. The steering offers a good turning radius, along with a solid on-center feel. The brakes feel great and stop very well. Pedal feel is solid and as expected from any other Subaru. You can also utilize the S-Pedal system, which will stop the Solterra without depressing the brakes.

Pricing for the Subaru Solterra starts at $44,995. You have a choice of trim levels. The mid-level Limited model we drove came with a sticker price of $50,432.

There is good news: Subaru Solterras are easily available through the Luther Bloomington store. All you have to do is ask!

Yes, there is a growing choice available of battery-electric vehicles. Which one should you choose? If you want to stick with a brand that is loyal to our community, the Subaru Solterra should be considered. It drives better than you think and is quite friendly to your needs and wants! ∎

LAVENDER'S

FIRST THURSDAYS

Buy A Drink. Make A Connection. Have Fun.

Join Lavender and our host partners, Ma'am and Quorum

THURSDAY

July 6 • 5:30 - 8:00 PM

ROCK ELM

Rock Elm Tavern
1665 County Road 24 • Plymouth

PRESENTED BY:

entertaining you!
Chanhassen
DINNER THEATRES

TWIN CITIES LGBTQ+ HAPPY HOUR

COME AS YOU ARE - NO DRESS CODE

Enjoy complimentary light appetizers, drink specials, and a chance to register to win great prizes!
Register for FREE at LavenderMedia.eventbrite.com or just show up.

Your partner for good℠

With over 55 clinics, 8 hospitals, award-winning health insurance and an institute dedicated to advanced research and education – we're your partner for all of it. Your partner for good. Come see us at Twin Cities Pride. Visit **healthpartners.com/yourpartner**.

care • insurance • research

HealthPartners®